

# A HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION

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*E. B. SANFORD*



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By  
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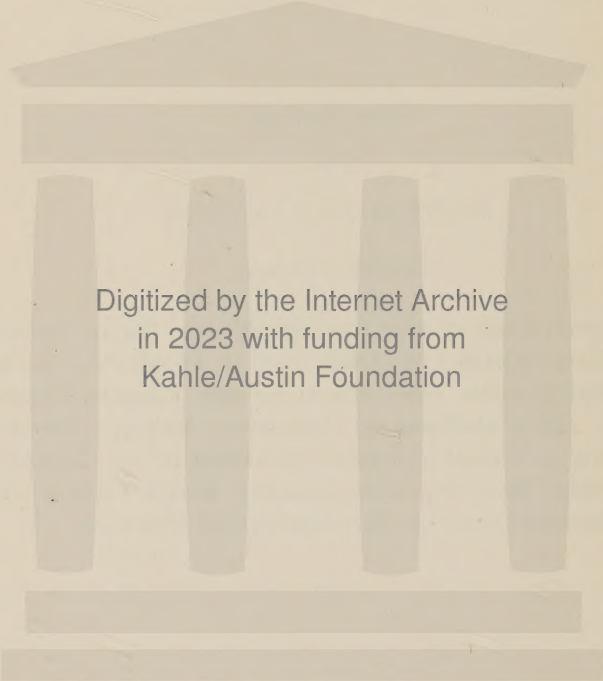
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Is  
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TO MY FRIENDS,

IN EVERY PART OF THE UNITED STATES, WITH WHOM  
FOR MANY YEARS I WAS ENGAGED IN WORK THAT LAID  
THE FOUNDATION AND ORGANIZED THE FEDERAL COUN-  
CIL OF THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AMERICA REPRESENTING A  
COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP OF NEARLY  
EIGHTEEN MILLIONS AND TRACING THEIR ORIGIN TO  
THE REFORMATION OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.



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## PREFACE.

Since the day, in boyhood, when I discovered in my father's library D'Aubigne's "History of the Reformation," the era of the Protestant Revolution has been a favorite field of reading and study. A concise narrative, of necessity, abbreviates many important details and can give but little space to many individual workers who rendered fruitful aid in their day and generation. I trust, however, that I have omitted nothing essential to a clear understanding of the great movement of the Sixteenth Century that changed the history of Christianity and the world.

The amount of literature that has come from the press regarding the Reformation is enormous. The work and life of Luther have been the storm centre of discussion that has continued during the past four centuries. Even in recent years the great Reformer has been made the object of malignant assaults that have made as little impression on candid and thoughtful scholars as the wrathful waves that break upon the rock foundations of Gibraltar.

Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and Knox, the four great leaders of the Reformation, in their personality and work, loom larger with the passing centuries because the principles for which they contended had in them the seed truth of the kingdom of God. Never losing sight of the providential preparation that led up to the incident, we may well make the October afternoon in 1517, when Luther affixed his *Theses* on the church door at Wittenberg, the opening of a new era in the world's history. From

that hour until now, the Christ inspired principles of democracy, unfolded in the New Testament, have faced the forces of autocracy and imperialism entrenched in Church and State. The end is not yet, but through the awful storm clouds, out of which lightning strokes have brought millions of men to an untimely death, gleams of light break over the horizon. In these epoch making years when allied nations, as never before, are lifting up the ideals of democracy and brotherhood, we do well to recall the story of the Reformation. Many who have prayerfully pondered over the question, why such sacrifice of blood and treasure should be required, now see that the agonies of the Inquisition and the fires of Smithfield presaged the consecration of martyr hosts who in the Twentieth Century have given their lives on the altar of Freedom.

Christian democracy stands for an open Bible; liberty of thought and conscience, and the separation of Church and State. The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century was in its spirit and ideals the renaissance of the early Church. In the lands beyond Germany this social, political, as well as religious upheaval, gave birth to modern democracy whose record is found in the history of the Huguenot struggle in France; the Rise of the Dutch Republic; Puritan England, and the founding of this United States.

This history has an important bearing upon the question of Christian unity and Church unity. Democracy and autocracy cannot find a common standing ground for organized union. They build upon principles that are so dissimilar that one or the other must be discarded in laying foundations. Autocracy, in Church and State, has

been brought to the bar of judgment and found wanting. Civilization and Christianity have suffered immeasurable loss by the selfish and arrogant demands of imperialism. The titanic struggle of these days bears testimony that Christian democracy and brotherhood represent the hope of Church and State. They stand for truths that lie at the heart of the spirit and principles of the kingdom of God and in so far as they prevail in the life of the nation, the family, and the individual, the promise of the Risen Lord and Saviour of mankind, will be fulfilled. "Lo I am with you to the end of the world."





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Dr. Thomas M. Lindsay's *A History of the Reformation*, 2 vols. (1906-7), is the best and most comprehensive work. *The Reformation*, by Professor George P. Fisher (1873), still holds a place among standard histories; it furnishes in the Appendix an exhaustive list of works in general history relating to the period of the Reformation. *Luther in Light of Recent Research* (1916), by Heinrich Böhmer, of Marburg University, translated by Carl F. Huth, Jr., of University of Chicago, is interesting and helpful; *Conversations With Luther* (1915), translated and selected by Preserved Smith, Ph.D., and Herbert Percival Gallinger, Ph.D., gives choice selections from his famous "Table Talk." To those who wish to secure a brief but admirable summary of the theological views of Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingli, and Calvin, we commend Professor Arthur Cushman McGiffert's *Protestant Thought Before Kant* (1911).



PART I.

FORERUNNERS OF THE REFORMATION.

MARTIN LUTHER AND THE REFORMATION IN GERMANY.





## CHAPTER. I.

THE CENTURIES BEFORE THE REFORMATION. THE PROTESTANTS OF MEDIEVAL TIMES. THE WALDENSAINS.

Four hundred years ago (October 31, 1517) the city of Wittenberg, fifty-five miles southwest from Berlin, the capital of Germany, was the scene of an epoch making incident in the world's history. The principal street of the city follows the windings of the river Elbe, and on this autumn day was filled with men, women, and children who were anticipating and preparing for the celebration on the morrow of the feast of All Saints. The beautiful church, recently erected by Frederick of Saxony, was the special centre towards which the people directed their steps. At great expense the Elector had gathered from many lands sacred relics that were placed in gold and silver cases adorned with precious stones. Every pilgrim, from the lowliest peasant to the proudest noble, who looked with superstitious awe upon these relics and confessed his sins, obtained full forgiveness. No wonder the aisles of the Palace church were crowded.

The October day was drawing to a close when a sturdy young priest strode along the street holding in his hand a hammer and a roll of manuscript. It was not an uncommon scene. The university of the city and the church were closely related and important announcements were frequently posted on its entrance door. But we can imagine that the drama we are witnessing was one that attracted special interest. Then, as always, Martin Luther was a man of that physical and intellectual distinction

that compels attention from the passing crowd, but in Wittenberg he was already regarded by every dweller in its homes with affectionate awe and respect. The story of his early life and the brilliant career in scholarship that had brought him in his thirty-fifth year to his present position as professor of theology, was known to most of them. But there were other reasons that had already made this sturdy young priest a man of destiny and hope in the eyes of some, whose gaze followed him as he nailed his manuscript upon the door of the church. Already his fame as an eloquent preacher was spread abroad in every part of Saxony. Even Rome had learned of the new voice that had denounced the sins and corruptions of the papal court. Martin Luther, from the student days when he won high distinction as a brilliant scholar, had early attracted the attention of men holding high official positions. Their mandate, strengthened by the petition of admiring teachers, had bestowed upon him a place of high distinction and responsibility as professor in the university that owed its existence to the beloved Elector of Saxony, who became the stalwart supporter and close friend of the man whom the centuries were to number among the world's great leaders and reformers. His life and work has a commanding place in the unfolding of this story of the Protestant Reformation, but there had been a long providential preparation before he came to power and leadership.

. . . . .  
Every great movement that changes the currents of history has back of its era of triumphant victories a long record of preparatory history. The centuries that intervened between the day of Pentecost and the time when

Leo X. ascended the papal throne lead us on a long and often sad and dreary journey. The Acts of the Apostles cover a brief period that in its spiritual and ecclesiastical life discloses the simplicity that marked the character and work of the Divine Founder of Christianity. The Apostolic age was followed by two centuries in which dogmatic discussions rent the infant Church as it entered upon days of bitter persecution in which were given to a pagan world the witness, even unto death, of a martyr host.

It is in this period, as Dean Stanley tells us, that we find the clue and answer to some of the great questions of ecclesiastical history.<sup>1</sup>

“How was the transition effected from the age of the Apostles to the age of the Fathers, from Christianity as we see it in the New Testament to Christianity as we see it in the next century, and as, to a certain extent, we have seen it ever since?

“No other change equally momentous has ever since affected its fortunes, yet none has ever been so silent and secret. The stream in that most critical moment of its passage from the everlasting hills to the plains below, is lost to our view at the very point where we are most anxious to watch it; we may hear its struggles under the overarching rocks; we may catch its spray on the boughs that overlap its course; but the torrent itself we see not, or see only by imperfect glimpses. It is not so much a period for ecclesiastical history as for ecclesiastical controversy and conjecture. A fragment here, an

<sup>1</sup>Introductory lecture on “The History of the Eastern Church.” I am confident my readers will thank me for quoting at length this lucid and masterly statement.

allegory there; romances of unknown authorship; a handful of letters of which the genuineness of every portion is contested inch by inch; the summary examination of a Roman magistrate; the pleadings of two or three Christian apologists; customs and opinions in the very act of change; last but not least, the faded paintings, the broken sculptures, the rude epitaphs in the darkness of the catacombs—these are the scanty, though attractive, materials out of which the likeness of the early Church must be reproduced, as it was working its way, in the literal sense of the word, ‘under ground,’ under camp and palace, under senate and forum—as unknown, yet well known: as dying, and behold it lives.’

“This chasm once cleared, we find ourselves approaching the point where the story of the Church once more becomes history—becomes once more the history, not of an isolated community, or of isolated individuals, but of an organized society incorporated with the political systems of the world. Already, in the close of the Second and the beginning of the Third Century, the Churches of Africa, now seen for a few generations before their final disappearance, exhibit distinct characters on the scene. They are the stepping-stones by which we cross from the obscure to the clear, from chaos to order. Of these the Church of Carthage illustrates the rise of Christianity in the West, the Church of Egypt that of Christianity in the East.

“Another and a wider sphere was in store for the progress of the Church than in its own native regions; another and a nobler conquest than that of its old worn-out enemy on the tottering throne of the Cæsars. The Gothic tribes descended on the ancient world; the fabric of civilized

society was dissolved in the mighty crisis; the fathers of modern Europe were to be moulded, subdued, educated. By whom was this great work effected? Not by the Empire—it had fled to the Bosphorus; not by the Eastern Church—its permanent conquests were in another direction. In the Western, Latin, Roman clergy, in the missionaries who went forth to Gaul, to Britain, and to Germany, the barbarians found their first masters; in the work of controlling and resisting the fierce soldiers of the Teutonic tribes lay the main work, the real foundation, the chief temptation of the Papacy. From the day when Leo III. placed the crown of the new Holy Roman German Empire on the head of Charlemagne, the stream of human progress and the stream of Christian life, with whatever interruptions, eddies, counter-currents, flowed during the next seven centuries in the same channel. As the history of the earlier stages revolved round the characters of the Fathers or of the Emperors, so the history of the Middle Ages, with all their crimes and virtues, revolved (it is at once the confession of their weakness and their strength) round the character and the policy of the Popes. What good they did, and what good they failed to do, by what means they rose, and by what they fell, during that long period of their power, form the main questions by which their claims must be tested.

“And now a new revolution was at hand, almost as terrible in its appearance and as trying in its results as any that had gone before. The fountains of the great deep were again broken up. New wants and old evils had met together. The failures of the Crusades had shaken men’s belief in holy places. Long abuses had shaken their belief in Popes, bishops, monasteries, sac-

raments, and saints. The revival of ancient learning had revealed truth under new forms. The invention of printing had raised up a new order of scribes, expounders, readers, writers, clergy. Institutions which had guided the world for a thousand years, now decayed and out of joint, gave way at the moment when they were most needed. Was it possible that the Christian Church should meet these trials as it had met those which had gone before? It had lived through the fall of Jerusalem; it had lived through the ten persecutions; it had lived through its amalgamation with the Empire; it had lived through the invasion of the barbarians; but could it live through the struggles of internal dissolution? Could it live through the shipwreck of the whole outward fabric of its existence? Could the planks of the vessel, scattered on the face of the raging flood, be so put together again as to form any shelter from the storm, any home on the waters? Did the history of the Church come to an end, as many thought it would, when its ancient organization came to an end, in the great change of the Reformation?"

These questions find answer in the four hundred years of Protestant Church history that have come and gone since that October afternoon when Martin Luther, the monk of Erfurt and teacher of theology, nailed his theses regarding indulgences upon the church door at Wittenberg.

In the centuries that followed the decline and fall of the Roman Empire we must not forget the forces represented in the homes that in the daily struggle for bread sheltered the untold millions of men, women, and youth who dwelt in the cities and tilled the fields of sunny



Italy. A life among the ruins of an imperial civilization that tradition and surroundings still kept in mind. The barbarous hordes that came out of the German forests and that crossed the channel from Britain found their conquering way to Rome along the magnificent highways that the Empire, in the days when Christ was born in Bethlehem of Judea, had built as a mighty network binding its every part into a unity of imperial power.

In the order of Providence it was out of this rough hewn material of German, Anglo-Saxon, and Gaulish ancestry that Christianity was to build the fabric of civilization that arose in the Middle Ages. If one dwells alone upon the corruption that gradually festered in the papal court; if the strife for ecclesiastical and civil power that brought the Church into conflict where Christ and His Truth were wounded and trampled upon by the ambition and selfish aims and purposes of godless popes and emperors, overshadow every other form of life and activity, we shall form a most erroneous conception of the years that were indeed marked by such error in doctrinal belief and such ignorance and superstitious fears that they have been sometimes marked in the annals of history as the dark ages. But the Light was by no means entirely lost. What traveler from the New World, then unknown to the dwellers of Europe, ever trod the aisles of the great cathedrals erected in the Middle Age without feeling that every spire and altar and window is a silent witness to the faith that through Him, "who for us men and our salvation came down from heaven," sustained and gave strength and peace to untold multitudes in the centuries that preceded the Reformation?

In the rise of the Roman Church, and the marvelous grip it secured on civil as well as religious institutions, great men at times occupied the papal throne; men and women of rare devotion and spiritual character were to be found in convent and monastery cells. In homes of noble heritage as well as in lowly peasant huts there were, in the passing generations, a great host of honest, earnest, spiritually minded Christians. God alone knows how many hearts, in these dark tempestuous days, uttered their prayer of silent "protest" against the sensual life of corrupt priests, and the selfish and wicked machinations of weak and ambitious prelates.

Sometimes these "protests" were not silent. Protestantism had great forerunners before the miner's son of Mansfield was born. Their heroic and witnessing lives we do well to recall in the year that brings round in the annals of time the four hundredth anniversary of the day when the crowd about the church door at Wittenberg witnessed the historic act that set in motion the forces that have made Protestant Christianity and Church life what it is to-day.

Three hundred years before this event we discover in the valley of the Rhone, and especially in some of the Swiss valleys, the stirring of a revolt against the teachings of Rome and a degenerate priesthood. It was about 1170 that Peter Waldo, a wealthy merchant of Lyons, after passing through an experience of great spiritual awakening, dedicated himself to vows of poverty and efforts to reach the common people with religious instruction. Having secured a translation of the Gospels and other portions of Scripture, he went about here and there, as a lay preacher. As disciples gathered



under his leadership he sent them out after the manner of the seventy, two by two, to carry the Gospel message into the neighboring villages. They became known as the Poor Men of Lyons, and were largely recruited from the artisan class. They strove to imitate the mode of life that existed in the early Church and followed the example of their leader in distributing what they possessed among their poorer brethren. They conveyed their message even to the Papal court and Pope Alexander III. "condescended to approve their poverty." Their appeal for permission to preach was denied and they were condemned for presuming to assume any religious functions. Waldo met the interdict of the Archbishop of Lyons with the assertion "that he must obey God rather than man." Persecuted and condemned as heretics, the followers of Waldo, known now as Waldenses, were outspoken in their hostility to the Church. They repudiated its entire hierarchical and ritual system and contended for the most simple and democratic ecclesiastical form of government. Any layman of virtuous character they counted worthy to administer religious rites. Repudiating the claim that a wicked priest could still perform clerical duties, they condemned the supremacy of popes and prelates in civil affairs. Accepting Baptism and the Eucharist as the only Sacraments, they repudiated prayers for the dead, festivals, lights, purgatory and indulgences. "The modesty, frugality, honest industry, chastity, and temperance of the Poor Men of Lyons was universally acknowledged." Familiar with the Bible in their own language, their preaching made many converts in the city of Lyons and the neighboring country.

Driven from France, by relentless persecution, the Waldenses fled to Aragon, Savoy, and Piedmont. They were soon harried out of Spain but maintained themselves in Languedoc till 1330. In 1545 the Parliament at Aix took action that in the most cruel manner exterminated them in Provence. Scattered in different provinces it was not until the war of the Cevennes that they were finally driven out of France. Finding at last a safe retreat in the secluded valleys of Piedmont they founded a distinct Church that has remained till the present day. They may well be termed the "Pilgrim Fathers" of the Reformation.

## CHAPTER II.

### FRANCISCAN AND DOMINICAN ORDERS. ENGLISH FORE-RUNNERS OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION. JOHN WICLIF.

The dawn of the Eleventh Century found Christendom the scene of seething spiritual unrest and intellectual ferment. Two of the greatest leaders in the long history of the Roman Church were born in the last decades of the Tenth Century. St. Dominic in 1170, St. Francis in 1182. Sacerdotal Christianity had developed an aristocracy of power and caste that more and more separated even the lowest ranks of the priesthood from the common people. This priesthood, subservient in every thought to Rome, was to a great extent exercised by men ignorant and bigoted to the last degree. The office of teaching and preaching had fallen into disuse and even disrepute. The Ritual was repeated by lips that droned the service in a mechanical and perfunctory way. "Everywhere the bell summoned to the frequent service, the service was performed, and the obedient flock gathered to the chapel or church, knelt, and either performed their orisons, or heard the customary chant and prayer." Beyond this there was given no word of helpful instruction. The monasteries gave neither light nor spiritual guidance to the people. In the loneliness and seclusion of their cells their members were utterly isolated from the world.

The intellectual movement that in these days was thronging the universities of Paris and Oxford with indigent scholars, was stirring the life of the humble homes from which they came. In early times when the Roman

element predominated, the Latin service of the Church was more or less intelligible to the congregation. But in large sections of Europe Latin had ceased to be the means of ordinary communication. The rude dialects of the North were growing into the German and English languages. In France and Spain and even Italy Latin was displaced by vernacular speech that from the field and market-place grew into the languages that were to give to future generations the poetry of Dante, Chaucer, and Milton. One cannot read the story of the life work of Dominic the founder of the Friar Preachers and of Francis of Assisi without feeling that they were providential men. Under the enthusiastic guidance and leadership of Dominic "Christendom was at once overspread with a host of zealous, active, devoted men, whose function was popular instruction. They were gathered from every country, and spoke, therefore, every language and dialect. In a few years from the sierras of Spain to the steppes of Russia; from the Tiber to the Thames, the Trent, the Baltic Sea, the old faith, in its fullest medieval, imaginative, inflexible rigor, was preached in almost every town and hamlet. The Dominicans did not confine themselves to popular teaching; the more dangerous, if as yet not absolutely disloyal seats of the new learning, of inquiry, of intellectual movement, the universities of Bologna, Paris, Oxford are invaded and compelled to admit these stern apostles of unswerving orthodoxy; their zeal soon overlapped the pale of Christendom; they plunge fearlessly into the remote darkness of heathen and Mohammedan lands, from whence come back rumors, which are constantly stirring the minds of their votaries, of wonderful conversions and not less

wonderful martyrdoms.”<sup>1</sup> Without doubt the influence of these itinerant preachers was a mighty power in quickening the spiritual life and understanding that prepared the way for the providential mission of Wiclif, Huss, Erasmus, and other forerunners of the Reformation. “Zeal,” exclaimed Dominic, “must be met by zeal, lowliness by lowliness, false sanctity by real sanctity, preaching lies by preaching truth.” Under this banner, with unfaltering courage, Dominic led the great order, which he founded, until his death, August 6, 1221.

Twelve years younger than the Spaniard Dominic, Francis of Assisi became the founder of another great order of Mendicant Friars. In youth a pleasure loving soldier, it was during an illness in his twenty-fifth year that the entire current and purpose of his life was changed. He cast in his lot with the poorest class and became an attendant in the hospital for lepers at Gubbio. Turning a deaf ear to the entreaties of many friends, he returned to Assisi and continued the most menial service while he preached the doctrines of penitence and self-sacrifice. Other young men joined him and the foundations were laid of the order of the Franciscans.

Little did these men realize that they were doing a work that was finally perverted from its pristine spirit by insidious evils that poisoned the life of monasteries and nunneries to such an extent that the feeling was aroused that became a vital factor in bringing about the revolt from Rome, a revolt that unsealed the Bible and made the silent protests of the Middle Ages, stones in the foundations of that Protestant form of Christianity that

<sup>1</sup>Milman's History of Latin Christianity, Vol. V, p. 237.

gave birth in the fullness of time to the principles of a democracy, in Church and State, that has thus far attained fullest realization in the government and civil and religious institutions of the United States of America. Roman Catholicism, in its present form and age-long history, stands for a monarchical conception of Christianity that is utterly opposed to the democratic ideals and institutions of Evangelical Christianity. Tolerance forbids persecution. Heretics are no longer burned at the stake. But honesty of faith, and courage and purpose to uphold the principles and doctrines enunciated by Christ and illustrated in the history of the early Church, forbids the passing of Protestantism until the unity of a free democracy has been achieved. Submission to any conditions other than these is inconceivable.

We turn now to a story that has a peculiar interest, especially to those who, by reason of ancestry, share in the heritage of English history. The conversion of Britain to Christianity dates back to the days when Gregory the Great laid the foundations of medieval papacy. The incident that called the attention of this remarkable ecclesiastical leader to the island that was the extreme western outpost of the Roman Empire, is a familiar story. In the early days of his priesthood, Gregory noted the fair faces and golden hair of some lads who stood bound in the market-place of Rome. Inquiring as to the country from whence they came, he asked those in charge of them what name they bore. "They are English, Angles." "Nay," said Gregory, "not Angles but Angels, with faces so angel-like. From what land do they come?" "From Deira," was the answer. "De ira!" said the young priest, "aye, plucked from God's ire, and called to Christ's

mercy! What is the name of their King?" "Aella." Again Gregory made a play upon this reply. "Alleluia shall be sung in Aella's land," he exclaimed. When four years later the marriage of Bertha, the daughter of the Frankish king Charibert of Paris, to Aethelbert of Britain, opened the door of opportunity, Gregory sent Augustine, a Roman abbot, with a band of monks to preach the gospel to the English people (597).

It is not our province to tell the story of the conversion of Britain to the Christian faith. We return to the reception which the followers of Dominic and Francis of Assisi received as, in their barefoot wanderings with coarse frock of serge bound with a girdle of rope, they crossed the channel and penetrated every part of England, giving their message and help to the poor, preaching to the artisans in the growing towns, and lecturing in the universities. "We can hardly wonder," says the historian Green, "at the burst of enthusiasm which welcomed the itinerant preacher, whose fervid appeal, coarse wit, and familiar story brought religion into the fair and the market-place." In these years (1221-1260) the followers of Francis made their homes in the leper settlements that had their origin in the wretched and unsanitary conditions that existed in sections of the towns and cities. In London they built their rough huts in the midst of the slaughter houses of Newgate. They illustrated in their day the spirit of the Salvation Army of the Nineteenth Century.

History repeats itself. Success brought into the ranks of the Friars, those who yielded to the desire for more of the luxuries of the table; for more congenial and artistic surroundings; and, above all, for books and appli-



ances that would open to them the treasures of learning that the universities were so widely distributing. From the ranks of these Mendicant orders there came men who were profound students of theology. They lectured to eager listeners in the churches and taught philosophy in the cloisters of the monasteries. Under the stimulus of the followers of Francis, Oxford became a rival of Paris and the great schoolmen, Roger Bacon, Dun Scotus, and Ockham, came to their appointed tasks. A fearless spirit of inquiry guided the growing movement among the masses of the English people in their coming struggle with the Crown. "The position of the Friars," says Green, "is clearly and strongly marked throughout this whole contest. The University of Oxford, which had now fallen under the direction of their teaching, stood first in its resistance to papal exactions and its claim of English liberty. The classes in the towns on whom the influence of the Friars told most directly were the steady supporters of freedom throughout the Barons' War (1258-1265). Adam March was the closest friend and confidant both of Grosseteste and Earl Simon of Montfort."

Robert Grosseteste (1175-1253), one of the greatest scholars, if not the greatest, of his age, has been called the "Harbinger of the Reformation." From the time he was made bishop of Lincoln, in 1235, he labored indefatigably to secure the reform of the Roman Church. The action of Innocent IV. in giving some of the richest benefices in England to Italians, who drew their revenues but never entered the country, aroused his indignation. A visit to Rome strengthened his conviction of the corruption of the papal court and at the council of Lyons (1250) he preached a sermon in which he declared



that the Roman pontiff and his court "was the fountain and origin of all the evils of the Church." "He was," says Matthew Paris, in his chronicles, "the open rebuker of both the pope and the king, censor of prelates, corrector of monks, instructor of clerks, an unwearied examiner of the books of Scripture, a crusher and despiser of the Romans." We do not wonder that the request of Edward I. that he be canonized was not favorably received at Rome.

We come now to the life work of one of the forerunners of the Reformation whose name looms higher with the passing centuries. The early years of John Wiclif are hidden in an obscurity that leaves in doubt the exact time and place of his birth. We know that he sprang from a lowly English home in Yorkshire that encouraged him to join the company of indigent scholars that were crowding the cloisters of Oxford and Cambridge. The light of the "New Learning" had found its way as a source of inspiration and quickening thought not only into the monasteries and the stately halls of the nobility of England, but into its villages and moorland cottages. Evidently Wiclif must have been a scholar, in his student days, of rare promise. Before he entered upon the career that brought him into wide public notice he had gained a remarkable reputation at Oxford as a lecturer in divinity. He had already disclosed that strength of character, originality of intellect and undaunted courage that characterized his entire career. While a master of Latin he had launched his fiery invectives against the idleness and profligacy of the clergy, in the English tongue which he was to aid in after years, especially

through his translation of the Bible, in making a more effective vehicle for the use of the creative genius of Chaucer, and in the years a little later on, of Shakespeare, Milton and John Bunyan.

In 1365 Wiclif was appointed Warden of Canterbury. Other Church preferments came to him, but he loved Oxford and here in the discharge of his duties as professor of divinity he spent most of his life.

“The burden of Wiclif’s teaching was the exposure of the indolent fictions which passed under the name of religion in the established theory of the Church. He was a man of most simple life; austere in appearance, with bare feet and russet mantle. As a soldier of Christ, he saw in his great Master and His Apostles the patterns whom he was bound to imitate. By the contagion of example he gathered about him other men who thought as he did; and gradually, under his captaincy, these ‘poor priests,’ as they were called—vowed to poverty, because Christ was poor—vowed to accept no benefice, lest they should misspend the property of the poor, and because, as apostles, they were bound to go where their Master called them, spread out over the country as an army of missionaries, to preach the faith which they found in the Bible—to preach, not of relics and of indulgences, but of repentance and of the grace of God. They carried with them copies of the Bible which Wiclif had translated, leaving here and there, as they traveled, their costly treasures, as shining seed-points of light; and they refused to recognize the authority of the bishops, or their right to silence them.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Froude’s History of Henry VIII., Vol. I, p. 304.

"The spare, emaciated frame of Wiclif," says Green,<sup>1</sup> "weakened by study and asceticism, hardly promised a reformer who could carry on the stormy work of Ockham;<sup>2</sup> but within this frail form lay a temper quick and restless, an immense energy, an immovable conviction, an unconquerable pride. The personal charm which ever accompanies real greatness only deepened the influence he derived from the spotless purity of his life. As yet indeed Wiclif himself can hardly have suspected the immense range of his intellectual power. It was only the struggle that lay before him which prepared the dry and subtle schoolman to be the founder of our later English prose, a master of popular invective, of irony, of persuasion, a dexterous politician, an audacious partisan, the organizer of a religious order, the unsparing assailant of abuses, the boldest and most indefatigable of controversialists, the first reformer who dared, when deserted and alone, to question and deny the creed of the Christendom around him, to break through the tradition of the past, and with his last breath to assert the freedom of religious thought against the dogmas of the papacy."

The colors with which these great modern historians have painted this composite picture of Wiclif are abun-

<sup>1</sup>History of the English People, Vol. I, p. 295.

<sup>2</sup>William of Ockham, born at Ockham Surrey about 1270; died at Munich, April 7, 1347. A graduate of Oxford he joined the Franciscan order and studied under Dun Scotus in France. His fame as a schoolman was second only to his great teacher. He became a vigorous opponent of Pope John XXII., and was imprisoned at Avignon because of his condemnation of the seizure of ecclesiastical property. Making his escape from prison he found his way to Munich, where he spent the rest of his life in controversies that hastened the Reformation.

dantly furnished in the contemporary testimony of the times in which he lived. It was an opportune moment for the work providentially placed in his hands. The "great schism," that found rival popes fulminating their angry excommunications from Avignon as well as Rome, struck a blow at the ecclesiastical empire, reared in the Middle Ages upon the ruins of ancient Rome, from which it has never recovered. Even men of little education, trained from earliest childhood to bow with utter self-abnegation and obedience to papal edicts and the imperial power that enforced them, saw the weakness of the claim that set up these proud, selfish, and often unspeakably wicked ecclesiastical leaders, as the Vicegerents of Almighty God. Then, as to-day, the walls of the Palace of the Popes at Avignon, echoed the mockery of such blasphemous assertions. Even Roman Catholic historians, who plead eloquently for the faith and leadership of their Church, are compelled to acknowledge the shame of this rivalry that for a time placed two popes upon a throne of authority. With a near-sightedness that reveals a lack of even common wisdom and discretion those who controlled the papal court at Rome, in their selfish greed, seized upon ecclesiastical property and patronage in England and used these resources in meeting the expenses of luxurious living under the shadow of St. Peter's church. Some of the richest benefices in England were held by Italian incumbents who never crossed the channel or gave an hour of service to the people whom they impoverished by their selfish demands. It was asserted in the "Good Parliament" (1376) that "the taxes levied by the pope amounted to five times the amount of those levied by the king." "The brokers of the sinful

city of Rome," wrote Wiclif, "promoted for money unlearned and unworthy caitiffs to benefices of the value of a thousand marks, while the poor and learned hardly obtained one of twenty. So decays sound learning. They present aliens who neither need nor care to see their parishioners, despise God's services, convey away the treasure of the realm, and are worse than Jews or Saracens. The pope's revenue from England alone is larger than that of any prince in Christendom. God gave His sheep to be pastured, not to be shaven and shorn."

Wiclif in these tempestuous times suffered without cause from the political ambitions of John of Gaunt and other leaders, but he held steadily to his course with undaunted courage. Then came the persecution of William of Wykeham, and action was taken against Wiclif. Wykeham while pouring out the resources of his vast riches in endowing great seats of learning, still contended for the hierarchical power of the Church, but Wiclif boldly declared that it was the function of the nation to decide as to the first and paramount claim to all moneys raised within the realm. "The religious annals of England," says Milman, "may well be proud of both these men."

The Bull dispatched from Avignon by Gregory XI. commanding the University of Oxford to prohibit the teachings of Wiclif met with a response that showed that their sympathies were with their lion-hearted associate. Cited to appear at the Church of St. Paul, Wiclif chose to go to Lambeth. The populace arrayed themselves on the side of the reformer. Crowding into the chapel, their fierce exhibition of anger and resentment alarmed the assembled bishops. The arrival of a messenger from the

Princess of Wales put an end to the proceedings. "They were," says the Roman Catholic historian, Walsingham, "as reeds shaken by the wind, became soft as oil in their speech, to the discredit of their own dignity, and the degradation of the Church. Panic-stricken they were as men that hear not, as those in whose mouth is no reproof." Wiclif had struck his blows at the corrupt practices of the highest and wealthiest dignitaries of the Church. His voice was that of a leader of the new democracy that in time was to revolutionize the life of England and crossing the then unknown Atlantic was to lay the foundations of the great Republic with its dominating Protestant life and institutions. Under the guidance of Wiclif a new order came into existence "which vied with and supplanted the Mendicant Orders in popularity. How they were maintained appears not; probably they were content with hospitable entertainment, with food and lodging. Such was the distinction drawn by Wiclif between our Lord and His Apostles and the sturdy beggars whom He anathematized, and whose mode of exaction is so humorously described by Chaucer. There is always a depth of latent religiousness in the heart of the common people, and these men spoke with simplicity and earnestness the plainer truths of the Gospel in the vernacular tongue. The novelty, and no doubt, the bold attacks on the clergy, as well as the awfulness of the truths now first presented in their naked form of words, shook, thrilled, intralled the souls of men, most of whom were entirely without instruction, the best content with the symbolic teaching of the ritual."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Milman's History of Latin Christianity, Vol. VII, p. 383.



In the earlier part of his career as a reformer Wiclif confined his protests against the ecclesiastical corruption and misused power of Rome. The time came when he brought to bear his strong intellectual powers and knowledge of the New Testament in an examination, exegetical, and historical, that resulted in his discrediting and finally repudiating the doctrine of Transubstantiation as then held by the Church. Upon the Sacrament of the Mass as it had, in the course of centuries, evolved from the Supper instituted by our Lord and observed with reverent simplicity by the early Church in the Middle Ages, Rome built the mighty structure of her hierarchical power and supremacy. "It was by his exclusive right to the performance of the miracle which was wrought in the mass that the lowliest priest was raised high above princes." In his denial of the doctrine of Transubstantiation Wiclif "in the spring of 1381 began that great movement of revolt which ended, more than a century after, in the establishment of religious freedom, by severing the mass of the Teutonic peoples from the general body of the Catholic Church." (*Green.*)

It was in these years when Wiclif took his stand against the corrupt practices and doctrinal errors of the Roman See that he completed his monumental English version of the Scriptures. From this time on the chained Bible became an open Bible. "It quitted the learned schools, the dead languages, the dusty shelves on which the clergy suffered it to sleep, covered with a confusion of commentators and Fathers." The invention of the printing press was soon to place the English Bible in the hands of the people. "Fancy," says Taine in his *History of English Literature*, "these brave spirits, simple and

strong souls, who began to read at night in their shops by candle light; for they were shopkeepers—tailors and bakers—who, with some men of letters, began to read, and then to believe, and finally got themselves burned. What a sight for the Fifteenth Century, and what a promise! It seems as though with liberty of action liberty of mind begins to appear; that these common folk will think and speak; that under the conventional literature, imitated from France, a new literature is dawning; and that England, genuine England, half mute since the Conquest, will at last find a voice."

John Wiclif in addition to his apostolic labors as a reformer holds a unique place in the history of English literature. He was one of the master builders of the language that within two centuries after his death blossomed forth and bore the fruit of the genius of Shakespeare, Milton, and Hooker.

"If Chaucer," says Green, "is the father of our later English poetry, Wiclif is the father of our later English prose. The rough, clear, homely English of his tracts, the speech of the plowman and the trader of the day, though colored with the picturesque phraseology of the Bible, is in its literary use as distinctly a creation of his own as the style in which he embodied it, the terse vehement sentences, the stinging sarcasms, the hard antitheses, which roused the dulllest mind like a whip."

In the midst of popular uprisings and conflicts among ambitious leaders, that were the premonition of volcanic forces that were soon to tear asunder the old foundations, Wiclif labored with indefatigable zeal. In addition to his labors in translating the Bible, tracts without number, controversial and expository, came from his prolific pen.



Fearless in the midst of threatening dangers, he sought no place of higher honor than that of the humble parish priest of Lutterworth. Through his devoted followers, the "poor priests," his teachings leavened England with "Christ's Law." He enjoyed no service more than the opportunity of preaching his "plain, bold, vernacular," sermons in the parish church at Lutterworth and the neighboring villages. After his condemnation at Oxford he retired to his parochial labors, where he continued until his sudden death two years later (1384).

John Wiclif was the greatest among the forerunners of the Reformation. In spite of persecution, the movement he had set in motion did not cease to "work underground," until it burst forth in the great upheaval of the Sixteenth Century. The quaint prophecy made, when in 1428 his ashes were cast by malicious hands upon the waters of the Avon, came true.

"The Avon to the Severn runs,  
The Severn to the sea,  
And Wiclif's dust shall spread abroad  
Wide as the waters be."

The books that Wiclif in his Oxford study wrote in Latin were copied and read all over Europe. "They were as well known in Bohemia as they were in England." Their seed truths fell into good ground. Bohemia became a veritable hot bed of heretical doctrines. Rome recognized that she was facing a struggle with forces that imperiled her very life. The history of the years from the death of Wiclif until the holding of the Council of Constance in 1415 is one whose tangled threads of

action are too numerous for mention in a condensed narrative. Numberless streams of influence united in the forces, social, civil, and ecclesiastical, that founded the nations of modern Europe; changed the history of Christendom; and opened a new era of life and civilization.

## CHAPTER III.

### JOHN HUSS. THE MORAVIAN BRETHREN.

It was a motley company that filled the streets and crowded the sidewalks of the picturesque and secluded German city of Constance in early June, 1414. From every part of Europe representatives were gathering to attend the Council towards which the thought of men, in every country obedient to the Roman See, turned with eager interest. From the day this great Universal Council opened its sessions, "and for several months after, the converging roads that led to this central city were crowded with all ranks and orders, ecclesiastical and laymen, Sovereign Princes, and Ambassadors and Bishops, the heads or representatives of the great Monastic Orders, theologians, Doctors of Civil Law, delegates from renowned universities, some with splendid and numerous retainers, some like trains of pilgrims, some singly and on foot. With these, merchants, traders of every kind and degree, and every sort of wild and strange vehicle."<sup>1</sup> Among the lookers on, as this procession, exhibiting every phase of medieval life, surges towards the doors of the great Cathedral church of Constance we must not forget the men who were slowly emerging out of the bondage of feudal institutions and traditions. They represented the lowly, forgotten hewers of wood and drawers of water who were the vanguard of the armies that were to win in the centuries near at hand, the victories of democracy against hierarchical and monarchical power. Al-

<sup>1</sup>Milman's History of Latin Christianity, Vol. VII, p. 429.

ready shackles were being riven that were worn with the rust of the Middle Ages, and weakened by struggles that like intermittent volcanic eruptions, again and again disclosed hidden fires beneath a seemingly firm and unchanging landscape.

In this historic Council of Constance two figures stand out most prominent. The one occupying the most exalted station in ecclesiastical and imperial power, the other a Bohemian teacher on his way to a martyrdom that has placed his name among the forerunners and pioneers of the Protestant Reformation. Pope John XXII. represented the strength and weakness of the Roman Church. Like so many of his predecessors his private life was rotten to the core. Enmeshed in ecclesiastical intrigues that threatened his downfall, he had asserted his plenary power and jurisdiction in the Edict that called together the council at Constance, ostensibly for "the healing of divisions and averting the dangers of Christendom." The schism wrought by the rival popes and courts at Avignon and Rome gave opportunity for selfish human ambitions to have full play to the scandal of all Christendom. Constance was the scene of Pope John's humiliation and exit from the stage of history further than his early dissolute life casts shame upon the hierarchical and infallible claims of the Roman See. Constance had power to condemn the gentle spirited Bohemian teacher and friend of Jerome of Prague, but the flames that extinguished the earthly life of John Huss helped to kindle a conflagration that burned up the dross and stubble of a decaying civilization and again made Christianity the hope and promise of a democracy that in victories already won gives assurance that the Twentieth

Century of the Christian era will witness victories that will transfer to the people of every land their rightful leadership under the one Lord and Master whose right it is to hold the Supreme place in the kingdom of which He is the Divine Ruler and Upholder. Whatever changes may come in the ecclesiastical and governmental direction of the Church of which Christ is the head one fact emerges more and more clearly even in the midst of the titanic struggle of the hours in which these lines are written. Democracy is to be the source of its life and power as against all human hierarchical claims and pretensions. In this century-old conflict the life of John Huss of Bohemia and John Wiclif of England, whose teachings inspired and guided him, will always be an oasis of promise in the history of the great movement to the advancement of which they gave their noble and devoted service. "John Huss," says Lechler,<sup>1</sup> "was not an original creative mind. As a thinker he had neither speculative talent or constructive faculty. In comparison with Wiclif he is a moon with borrowed light. Nor was he by nature a strong character, twice hardened, and keen as steel. Rather was he a feeble and tender spirit, more sensitive than designed for heroic deed. But with his tenderness there was combined moral tenacity, indomitable constancy, and inflexible firmness. If we add to these characteristics his purity and humility, his manly fear of God and tender conscientiousness, we have in Huss a man to love and admire. Seldom have the power of conscience and the imperial strength of a faith rooted in Christ asserted themselves in so commanding and heroic a manner."

<sup>1</sup>Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia.

Huss obeyed the command to appear at Constance, under the protection of a safe conduct from the Emperor Sigismund. This royal pledge of safety was violated. Thrown into a prison where his friend Jerome of Prague was soon incarcerated, Huss was heavily ironed and chained to a beam. On the 7th of June, 1415,—within two years of a century before Luther posted his theses on the church door at Wittenberg—Huss was brought before the Council of Constance. He calmly accepted the verdict of death rather than recant. On the 6th of July, his forty-second birthday, he was burned at the stake and his ashes cast into the Rhine. Following his death a civil war broke out in Bohemia in which the contending forces were the followers of Huss and the Emperor Sigismund, who had violated the safe conduct he had given the courageous accuser of the corruptions of Rome. This war, known as the Hussite War, did not cease until 1427. These valiant followers of Huss, under the name of Bohemian Brethren, existed in the time of Luther, and laid the foundations of the Moravian Church. Not to the Lutheran or Reformed Churches, in the fellowship of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, must be accorded the high distinction of having first led in the revolt from Rome. This honor belongs to the Moravian Church. The history in brief is this. In the contentions that followed the death of Huss, Peter of Chelcic in Bohemia, became a leader of a group who took a very radical stand on social questions and often quoted Wiclif as their authority in doctrinal questions. Later on they assumed the name of Communion of Brethren, which is the more correct translation of the later term of *Unitas fratrum*.

“At the synod of Reichenau (1495) they rejected the authority of Peter of Chelcic, and accepted the Bible as their only standard of faith and practice. They taught the Apostles’ Creed, rejected purgatory, the worship of saints and the authority of the Roman Church, practiced infant baptism and confirmation, held a view of the Sacrament similar to that of Zwingli, and, differing somewhat from Luther in their doctrine of justification by faith, declared that true faith was ‘to know God, to love Him, to do His commandments, and to submit to His will.’ With the Brethren, however, the chief stress was laid not on doctrine but conduct.”<sup>1</sup>

The growth of the Brethren from the opening of the Sixteenth Century was rapid. “In 1501 Bishop Luke of Prague edited the first Protestant hymn book; in 1502 he issued a catechism, which circulated in Switzerland and Germany and fired the catechetical zeal of Luther; in 1565 John Blahoslaw translated the New Testament into Bohemian; in 1579-1593 the Old Testament was added; and the whole, known as the Kralitz Bible, is used in Bohemia still.

At the very beginning of the Thirty Years’ War the Bohemian Protestants met an overwhelming defeat at the battle of the White Hill (1620). Some fled to England and Saxony and a few found homes in America. The “Hidden Seed” soon revived the spirit and work of the Moravian Brethren who found their home in Germany. Under the leadership of Christian David they crossed over the border into Saxony and settled down near the estate of Count Zinzendorf and under his patronage built the

<sup>1</sup>Rev. J. E. Hutton, author of *History of the Moravian Church*.

town of Hunhurt (1722-1727). The Protestant world reverently recognizes that one of the numerically smallest communions in its fellowship in its work as the Disopora (1 Peter 1:1) has been a mighty leavening power in the life of all the Evangelical Churches. John Wesley, the great founder of Methodism, never ceased to bear witness to the spiritual quickening that from the teaching and guidance of a Moravian brother (Peter Boehler) sent him forth to his marvelous life work. To the Moravians also, lineal descendants of John Huss, is accorded the honor, in the annals of foreign missions, of having first among Protestants proclaimed that it was the duty of the Church in its corporate life and service to carry the message of the Gospel to heathen lands.



## CHAPTER IV.

### SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS AT THE DAWN OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

While it is impossible in a brief narrative to unravel all the tangled threads of medieval history, careful attention must be given to dominant influences that are a part of the warp and woof of the story of the struggles that gave rise to the nations of Modern Europe; developed its commerce and wealth; reared its cities; brought about the Protestant Revolution; and ushered in the era of a new democracy and civilization founded upon New Testament ideals and principles. The Reformation was by no means solely a religious revolution. Modern historians have indeed gone so far as to assert that "the motives both remote and proximate which led to the Lutheran revolt were largely secular rather than spiritual."<sup>1</sup> This appears to us an exaggerated overstatement, but it must be conceded that the overthrow of discredited dogma was used to secure relief from the intolerable abuses of ecclesiastical power and supremacy. "German complaints of papal tyranny go back to Hildegard of Bingen and others who antedated Luther by more than three centuries."

From the hour Constantine espoused the Christian faith the Church was granted privileges and prerogatives that under the leadership of Rome developed the ecclesiastical system that found its imperial realization in the spiritual authority of the Papal See that arrogated con-

<sup>1</sup>H. C. Lea.

trolling influence over the secular power of the Holy Roman Empire. This assumption and exercise, both of spiritual and political authority, was the source of friction between Church and State that increased with the passing centuries. The encroachments and corruptions that arose out of the ecclesiastical system represented in the Roman Church will find constant illustration in our narrative. Other influences that paved the way for the Reformation it will be helpful to dwell upon briefly.

In medieval days the learned men of Europe employed Latin in their conversation, correspondence, and reading. Some of them did not know the common language of the country in which they lived. Latin was the language of Rome. Its use created an aristocracy of letters that in every way was separated from the masses of the people. The members of this aristocracy were looked upon as a part of the clergy and the Popes claimed them as their subjects. "For centuries in England a man convicted of a crime, by pleading that he could read and write, could claim benefit of the clergy," a privilege that exempted him from the punishments of the criminal law of the land. Under the scholastic system knowledge was founded on theology. The chief text book of the schoolmen was a theological folio of over one thousand pages. Matters of science were settled by Scripture texts and any freedom of inquiry was frowned upon. Galileo was one of the later victims of this system. Scattered over Europe there were between thirty and forty universities, some of which, at the beginning of the Protestant era, had been founded for two centuries. We have already noted that Wiclif, in the Fourteenth Century, was one of the fore-runners among university teachers who protested against

a system "that made both science and religion the property of a clerical class" and because of the exclusive use of the Latin language closed the door of knowledge to the common people. The progress of discussion and reform that broke down the scholastic system, and through the invention of printing and the revival of learning, opened the Bible and the treasures of ancient literature to intelligent men and women of every class, was an immense factor of influence in preparing the way for the Reformation.

The causes that destroyed the feudal system and developed the national life of modern Europe was a source of radical changes in the whole structure of society. This system of vassalage had divided some countries into little principalities. These petty lordships were jealous of control from powers above them. In their struggles to retain their position many of the feudal lords came under the control of stronger chieftains. Inheritance descending to the eldest son and the intermarriage of some of the greatest families developed the royal house of France. In Germany, where all the male heirs shared in the division of property, there was still an ever-increasing number of petty lordships. And the feudal system, as we shall see, was, in Germany, a source of weakness in connection with the work and progress of the Reformation. But in a general way the nations of Europe were passing out of the period of subjection to a feudal nobility and coming under the supremacy of their crowned kings.

Commerce was building up a multitude of towns. The trade and manufacturing interests of these towns made a market for the peasants. Under the feudal system these towns were mostly subject to feudal lords, but as their

wealth increased they rebelled against this bondage and in many cases they secured charters that made them free republics. In the coöperative plans that banded the members of the same trades in guilds we notice a phase of the growing spirit of democracy that was fostered through commerce. Not only did the towns seek to control their local affairs but they banded together in opposition to the feudal system, and gave their aid in advancing the claims and ascendancy of the Crown. In their efforts to weaken the hold of the feudal lords the towns in many ways aided the peasantry to break the shackles of feudal bondage, a bondage that was made unbearable by the exactions of the Church. Commerce introduced money rents and wages and many of the peasants found employment in the towns. In France and England especially their condition was much improved.

The commerce of the Mediterranean Sea conveyed the products of the East from the Levant to the ports of Italy. Silk was manufactured in Italy, Spain, and France. The manufacture of woolen goods was a northern industry. England was the great wool growing country. It kept busy the looms of its eastern counties and Flanders. The rule of the Roman Church regarding Lent and Friday made a market in every part of Europe for the fish caught in vast quantities in the North Sea. Antwerp became the chief mart of a commerce that enriched the Netherlands and built up towns on the Rhine and Danube. With wealth came the stirrings of independent thought; an enlarged intellectual outlook; the advancement of the arts of painting and architecture; an uplift of the masses out of a condition of ignorance and servitude; the rise of a great and influential middle class;

a class from which were to come the leaders of national and religious reform.

In this stirring of a new life the Crusades of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries played an important part. We must not forget that the primary force that set in motion the armies that under the standard of the Cross had for their purpose the deliverance of the Holy Land from the Mohammedans, was the Church. An Oxford scholar in summing up the historic record of this movement says: "The Crusades remain a wonderful and perpetually astonishing act in the great drama of human life. They touched the summits of daring and devotion, if they also sank into the deep abysms of shame. Motives of self-interest may have lurked in them—other worldly motives of buying salvation for a little price, or worldly motives of achieving riches and acquiring lands. Yet it would be treason to the majesty of man's incessant struggle towards an ideal good, if one were to deny that in and through the Crusades men strove for righteousness' sake to extend the Kingdom of God upon earth. Therefore the tears and the blood shed were not unavailing; the heroism and the chivalry were not wasted. Humanity is the richer for the memory of these millions of men, who followed the pillar of cloud and fire in the sure and certain hope of an eternal reward. The ages were not dark in which Christianity could gather itself together in a common cause, and carry the flags of its faith to the grave of the Redeemer; nor can we but give thanks for their memory, even if for us religion is of the spirit, and Jerusalem in the heart of every man who believes in Christ."

As regards political conditions at the dawn of the Sixteenth Century, we find that the medieval Church was their controlling source. This fact was a primary factor in bringing about the Reformation. Luther in his first appeal to the German people in his *Address to the German Nobility*, makes very little reference to religious conditions. "He deals almost exclusively with the social, financial, educational, industrial, and general moral problems of the day." The State and the Church were largely one. The medieval Church controlled "laws, lawgivers, law courts and lawyers. It used physical force to compel men to obey the laws. It kept prisons. It pronounced sentence of death. It was not a voluntary society. If people were not born into it, they were baptized into it without assent on their part. If they attempted to leave it they were treated as if criminally guilty and liable to be burned." We have already noted that the beginnings of the revolt against Rome may be traced back centuries before the birth of Luther. It is significant to recall that the day Luther invited the students at Wittenberg to witness the burning of the "godless book of the papal decrees" (December 10, 1520), he at the same time committed to the flames the whole body of the canon law.

While the feudal system continued in its full power we must concede that the Roman Church did much to restrain turbulent and ignorant princes and protect the weak, but "so soon as the modern national state began to gain strength, the issue between secular rulers and the bishops of Rome took a new form. The clergy naturally stoutly defended the powers which they had long enjoyed and believed to be rightly theirs. On the other hand, the State which could count upon the support of an ever-

increasing number of prosperous and loyal subjects, sought to protect its own interests and showed itself less and less inclined to tolerate the extreme claims of the pope. Moreover, owing to the spread of education, the king was no longer obliged to rely mainly upon the assistance of the clergy in conducting his government."<sup>1</sup>

The era of the Protestant Reformation was one in which political forces evolved the life of the modern nations of Europe. Martin Luther, and Lutheranism as a Church organization, were but prominent factors in the drama of the Sixteenth Century in which Protestantism was the leader of a Reformed Church and the foundation builder of a new democracy that gave the State its rightful place and authority.

<sup>1</sup>Professor J. H. Robinson, *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. XXIII, p. 6.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE OXFORD REFORMERS,—COLET, ERASMUS, MORE.

Our story again takes us back to England, the "Old Home," from which American Christianity has so largely drawn its life. For a brief space we recall some of the influences, aside from ecclesiastical conditions, that prepared Colet, Erasmus and other Oxford scholars for their providential work in the revolution that opened the era of the Protestant Reformation. Among the most potent of these influences was the revival of learning that found its centre in the city of Florence. The capture of Constantinople by the Turks compelled the Greek scholars within its walls to seek a new home. It was not strange that many of them turned their steps towards the prosperous and public spirited city on the Arno. The magnificent dome of the cathedral, that the genius of Brunelleschi had conceived and recently erected, overlooked one of the fairest scenes in all Europe. As wealth made its citizens opulent they became the patrons of art and the custodians of the newly opened treasures of ancient Greek and Roman literature; treasures that had been lost beneath the accumulated debris of the labors of the schoolmen of the Middle Ages, and the intellectual stagnation of the ritualistic routine of the monasteries. The coming of the exiled Greek scholars to Florence was at the opening of an era of world expansion that was to turn the currents of European life from its old channels. Columbus had discovered a New World. Sebastian Cabot had raised the standard of England upon the shores of

what is now the Atlantic seaboard of North America. A discovery momentous in its bearing upon the history of Evangelical Christianity. Portuguese sailors had rounded the Cape of Good Hope and found their adventurous way to India. The Mediterranean was alive with a commerce that was pouring wealth into the coffers of the merchants of Venice and Florence and making these cities the repositories of precious manuscripts that preserved the wonderful masterpieces of Greek and Roman letters produced in the days of the Cæsars and the spring time of Grecian history.

The hour had come when the fruits of the genius of earlier days and, above all, the revealed message of the Scriptures, was to become the possession not only of a few scholars, but of the common people. The invention of printing was the opening of a window through which the light of Divine Truth streamed alike into palaces, monasteries, and peasant homes, giving the message of the Bible to men struggling to free themselves from the bondage of feudalistic institutions. Florence, as the centre of the New Learning, attracted the attention of the scholars that thronged the universities that now existed in Spain, France, Italy, Germany, and England. The "Modern Athens" filled with the spirit of a revived interest in the works of the old Greek and Latin writers, became the home of men who found in Plato the highest ideals of philosophy. Disgusted with the corruption that marked the lives of the ecclesiastical leaders and the monks and priests of the Roman Church, they discarded Christianity and sought to enthrone pagan literature and pagan skepticism in the life of the people.

The times demanded a providential leader. Suddenly he stands before us as his burning message falls upon the startled multitude that crowds the great cathedral at Florence. Savonarola came to his mission, as did Paul and Wiclif and Luther, with a providential preparation. Born in a home where every educational advantage was given to him, he, like Luther, against his father's wish, turned from the profession of a learned doctor to seek the quiet and seclusion of a monastery cell. As he studied the Bible and tested the life about him, in Church and State, by its precepts, his soul caught fire. As early as 1486 he preached sermons that flayed the Papal Court as the source of evils that had poisoned the entire life of the Church. The flame of his hot indignation consumed his energies until the hour in 1498, when, by the mandate of a pope guilty "of murder and unheard-of crimes," his worn, emaciated body was burned within a few steps of the cathedral where untold thousands had listened to messages the echoes of which have come down through the passing centuries. The history of modern Italy may be traced back to the springs of living waters that were opened up in Florence and the surrounding country by Savonarola, the great Florentine reformer.

It was especially in England that the revival of learning gave a tremendous impetus to a spirit of religious reform that in time made it a land where Protestant ideals were triumphant. Among the Oxford students who bent their steps, at the earliest opportunity, towards Florence, were John Colet, Desiderius Erasmus, and Thomas More. All of these great men lived and died in the communion of the Roman Church, only one of them met a martyr's death, and in his case political rather than ecclesiastical

offenses brought the head of Thomas More under the ax of the executioner.

John Colet, in many respects, was a remarkable man. The son of a lord mayor of London at an early age he decided to become a priest in the Church. In Florence he studied both Plato and the Bible and returned to Oxford an enthusiastic follower of the Florentine reformers and filled with zeal for the new learning.

As a lecturer at the university on St. Paul's Epistles, he sought to bring the students who thronged about him to the fountain head of the waters of Life. It was indeed a new revelation. From time immemorial monks and priests had been utterly ignorant of the New Testament, except as portions of it were incorporated in the ritual that they perfunctorily recited with superstitious drone. Colet, by his scholarly lectures, completely revolutionized the theological thought of Oxford. The works of the schoolmen were dethroned from the place of supreme authority they had held so long and Christian thought wrought mighty spiritual changes in the hearts of young men who were to aid in laying the foundations of Protestantism in Great Britain.

While pursuing his studies in Italy, Colet, like Luther a little later, had his eyes opened to the corruptions of the Papal Court that had infected every rank of the priesthood and society. With no uncertain voice he condemned the evils of his times. "Whereas," he exclaims, "if the clergy lived in the love of God and their neighbors, how soon would their true piety, religion, charity, goodness towards men, simplicity, patience, tolerance of evil, conquer evil with good! How would it stir up the minds of men everywhere to think well of the Church of Christ."

In a spirit of mingled "grief and tears," he condemned the popes, whose lives had brought such shame and scandal upon Christendom, as "wickedly distilling poison, to the destruction of the Church." In an outburst of vehement denunciation of the evils that were sapping the life of society he cries out, "Oh, Jesus Christ, wash for us not 'our feet only, but also our hands and our head'! Otherwise our disordered Church cannot be far from death."

"The great fabric of belief built up by the medieval doctors," says Green,<sup>1</sup> "appeared to Colet, as simply 'the corruptions of the schoolmen.' In the life and sayings of its founder he found a simple and rational Christianity, whose fittest expression was the Apostles' Creed. 'About the rest,' he said with characteristic impatience, 'let divines dispute as they will.' Of his attitude towards the coarser aspects of the current religion his behavior at a later time before the famous shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury gives us a rough indication. As the blaze of its jewels, its costly sculptures, its elaborate metal work, burnt on Colet's view, he suggested with bitter irony that a saint so lavish to the poor in his lifetime would certainly prefer that they should possess the wealth heaped round him since his death. With petulant disgust he rejected the rags of the martyr which were offered for his adoration, and the shoe which was offered for his kiss. The earnestness, the religious zeal, the very impatience and want of sympathy with the past, which we see in every word and act of the man, burst out in the lectures which he delivered at Oxford. Even to the most critical among

<sup>1</sup>History of the English People, Vol. I, p. 382.

his hearers he seemed 'like one inspired, raised in voice, eye, his whole countenance and mien, out of himself.' Severe as was the outer life of the new teacher, a severity marked by his plain black robe and the frugal table which he preserved amidst his later dignities, his lively conversation, his frank simplicity, the purity and nobleness of his life, even the keen outbursts of his troublesome temper endeared him to his students and the group of eminent scholars with whom he was associated."

In this group the foremost figure is Erasmus. Unlike Colet, this great scholar was cradled in poverty. In orphan loneliness, thrust into a monastery by dishonest guardians who sought to filch from him the scanty means he had inherited, he left his monk's cell as soon as he attained his majority and earned his living by giving lessons to private pupils while attending the University of Paris. The generosity of an English nobleman enabled him to gain a coveted mastery of the Greek language at Oxford. Colet and More with Grocyn, and Linacre, became his close friends. "When," he writes in a letter, "I listen to my friend Colet, it seems to me like listening to Plato himself. In Grocyn, who can but admire the wide range of his knowledge? What could be more searching, deep, and refined than the judgment of Linacre? Whenever did nature mould a character more gentle, endearing, and happy than Thomas More's?"

Every one of these men was gifted with marked genius, but in industry, breadth of classical knowledge, and acuteness of mind the place of leadership must be given to Erasmus. He owed much to Colet, for it was from him he caught the spirit of religious zeal. In his eagerness to master Greek he decided to go to Italy. In response



to the urgent request of Colet that he remain by his side at Oxford Erasmus replied: "When I feel that I have the needful firmness and strength, I will join you." Coming days were to witness the fulfillment of this promise. For nine years (1500-1509) this little band of Oxford students were scattered. It was a time of marvelous intellectual and spiritual ferment. It is said that in the last thirty years of the Fifteenth Century all of the great Latin authors were made accessible to the poorest student by the recently invented printing press. Ten thousand editions of books and pamphlets were estimated to have been published in these decades. Within twenty years of the opening of the Sixteenth Century the literature of Greece was placed within the reach of all who mastered its language. As never before "men opened their eyes and saw."<sup>1</sup>

Erasmus started for Italy in 1500, but was stopped at Dover and literally robbed by custom-house officials of all his money. Compelled to discontinue his journey he continued his studies in France. Colet remained at Oxford until he was made Dean of St. Paul's and became a resident of London. More gained rapid advancement in the legal profession and in early manhood was elected a member of Parliament.

Erasmus visiting England in 1505 found his Oxford friends all living in London. Colet had married and in his home we can imagine the consultation was held that resulted in replenishing the empty purse of Erasmus and sending him rejoicing on his way to Italy. In 1509 Henry VIII. ascended the throne of England. The early

<sup>1</sup>Taine. History of English Literature.



years of his reign gave slight token of his cruel, imperious will that, in its sensual and ambitious purposes, wrought such vast changes in the civil and religious fabric of the English government and the life of the people. Generous and open handed in the use of the immense wealth his father had bequeathed to him the gifted young prince won popular favor, and older men prophesied the dawn of better days. Fond of learning and an apt and industrious student he did not forget the promising Oxford scholars with some of whom he was personally acquainted. Colet was made court preacher. More was given the prominent position of an under sheriff of London, and Erasmus was recalled from Italy and made professor of Greek at Cambridge. It was indeed a halcyon time of promise. Leading churchmen became the patrons both of letters and reform. Langton, Bishop of Winchester, we are told, "took delight in examining the young scholars of his episcopal family every evening and sent all the most promising of them to study across the Alps." Warham, the Archbishop of Canterbury, became the close and helpful friend of Erasmus. A friendship that found beautiful laudation in the great scholars preface to his edition of St. Jerome. While leisurely returning from Italy on horseback Erasmus outlined a satire in Latin on the follies of the age that he completed in the home of More in London. The "Praise of Folly" made an immense stir and proved an effective weapon of reform. The followers of the schoolmen were addressed by Folly in her cap and bells as "fellow fools"—men who professed to know everything and yet had not time to read the Gospels or Epistles of St. Paul.

Following the publication of this little book Erasmus entered on his duties as professor at Cambridge and soon took up the work that was to have so prominent a place in the record of these days. Over a century had elapsed since the death of Wiclif, but his works still followed him. Copies of his Bible had been carefully preserved. They had been read in secret places by men that knew that if they were detected the penalty of death would be inflicted. The seed truth of the kingdom had found lodgment in many hearts and now with the revival of letters and the invention of the printing press the providential hour had arrived when the oracles of God were to be unsealed and Christian faith and knowledge again become a source of spiritual power in the hearts of men. In 1516—the year before Luther affixed his theses to the church door at Wittenberg—Erasmus saw the completion of his monumental labors in the printing at Basle of the first edition of his translation of the Greek New Testament. In this edition in columns side by side was the original Greek text and his own new Latin translation. “I wish,” said Erasmus in his preface, “that even the weakest woman should read the Gospels—should read the Epistles of Paul; and I wish that they were translated into all languages, so that they might be read and understood, not only by Scots and Irishmen, but also by Turks and Saracens. I long that the husbandmen should sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plough, that the weaver should hum them to the tune of his shuttle, that the traveller should beguile with their stories the tedium of his journey.”

It is well for all, especially those of English ancestry, to remember that these days, in which we stand upon the threshold of the era of the Protestant Reformation, marked the spring time of what may be called the history of modern England and the beginnings of American history. The picture drawn by the fascinating pen of Froude vividly discloses the changes that were bringing to life a transformed world. "The paths trodden by the footsteps of ages were broken up: old things were passing away, and the faith and the life of ten centuries were dissolving like a dream. Chivalry was dying; the abbey and the castle were soon together to crumble into ruins; and all the forms, desires, beliefs, convictions, of the old world were passing away never to return. A new continent had risen up beyond the western sea. The floor of heaven, inlaid with stars, had sunk back into an infinite abyss of immeasurable space; and the firm earth itself, unfixed from its foundations, was seen to be but a small atom in the awful vastness of the universe. In the fabric of habit which they had so laboriously built for themselves, mankind were to remain no longer. And now it is all gone—like an unsubstantial pageant faded; and between us and the old English there lies a gulf of mystery which the prose of the historian will never adequately bridge. They cannot come to us, and our imagination can but feebly penetrate to them. Only among the aisles of the cathedral, only as we gaze upon their silent figures sleeping on their tombs, some faint conceptions float before us of what these men were when they were alive; and perhaps the sound of church bells, that peculiar creation of medieval age, which falls upon the ear like the echo of a vanished world."

In this period of change that brought about the transition of England from a Catholic to a Protestant country we discover the most potent instrumentality in the "open Bible," that the hand of Wiclif passed on to Colet and Erasmus, and they in turn to Tyndale and others who gave its precious treasures to the people in their "vulgar tongue." The Greek New Testament of Erasmus aroused the bitter resentment of priests, monks and scholastic divines who looked upon the old Vulgate version with feeling akin to Israelitish eyes that gazed upon the Ark of the Covenant. No doubt the pagan skepticism that had been spread abroad with the revival of Greek literature, strengthened this opposition. But in vain were these voices, clamoring for the "old ways," raised in bitter denunciation. The new translation from the tongue in which the Master and His Apostles uttered their message "became the topic of the day; the court, the universities, every household to which the New Learning had penetrated, read and discussed it. But bold as its language may have seemed, Warham not only expressed his approbation, but lent the work—as he wrote to its author—'to bishop after bishop.' The most influential of his suffragans, Bishop Fox of Winchester, declared that the mere version was worth ten commentaries."<sup>1</sup> The genius of Thomas More added the contribution of his genial and imaginative power in the publication of his *Utopia*. It was a dream that has become the hope of democracy; a dream that has not vanished in the smoke and carnage of the awful conflict that has made blood red the skies that have overarched Christian

<sup>1</sup>Green's *History of the English People*, Vol. I, p. 385.

Europe in the second decade of the Twentieth Century; a dream that as a reality may be nearer than we now think; an hour betokening the final overthrow of monarchical and hierarchical power, and the triumphs of democratic institutions so vividly delineated by the pen of Thomas More four centuries ago. May not 1917 prove to be the year that celebrates not only the historic incident from which we date the era of the Protestant Reformation, but the beginning of a new era in the history of Christianity and the firm establishment in Church and State of the principles of Christian democracy and brotherhood whose source we trace back to the teachings of Christ and the institutions of the Church in Apostolic times?

"More," says Seebohm,<sup>1</sup> "in his Utopia urged the points which Erasmus had inculcated in his 'Christian Prince.' The Utopians elected their own king, as well as his council or parliament. They hated war as the worst of evils; they aimed not at making the king and a few nobles rich, but the whole people. All property belonged to the nation, and so all the people were well off. Nor was education confined to one class; in Utopia everyone was taught to read and write. All magistrates and priests were elected by the people. Every family had a vote, and the votes were taken by ballot. Thus the keynote of More's 'Utopia' was, like the 'Christian Prince' of Erasmus, that governments and nations exist for the common weal of the whole people."

While these leaders in Oxford, Cambridge, and London were busy with their pens, they were active also in pushing the work of religious reform. They had no

<sup>1</sup>The Protestant Revolution, page 94.

thought of the impending break with Rome, but in the spirit with which the Master had driven the money changers from the outer courts of the temple they sought to cast out the evils that threatened the life of the Church. When the fortune of his father came into the hands of Colet he devoted it to founding a school for boys, under the very shadow of the great cathedral of which he was the Dean. This school, as its founder hoped, became a nursery of reform and the new learning. Its textbooks were prepared by Erasmus and other friends, and the Latin grammar studied in St. Paul's school was written by its founder.

Colet, at the request of his friend Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, preached the opening sermon at a convocation that brought together an assembly of bishops and clergy. In the strongest terms he condemned the prevalent loose living and immorality of the parish priests. In the presence of these ecclesiastics of every rank he boldly affirmed that their "worldly life was in many instances far worse heresy" than that of the poor Lollards, two of whom had been recently burned at Smithfield. The record of these years ought not to forget these men who were proud to be known as the successors of the itinerant preachers that were first sent out by Wiclif. They emulated the spirit and courage of the Puritans of a later time. The movement they represented became involved with political issues and revealed a spirit of revolt among the people that foretold the struggles of after years that freed England from the thralldom of Rome and laid the foundations of a free national life. Under the administration of Archbishop Arundel in 1401 they were condemned as heretics, and John Badby suffered martyrdom

at Smithfield nine years later. Disappointed in their hope to secure the support of Henry V., some of the more fiery and reckless Lollardites, under the leadership of Sir John Oldcastle, plotted a conspiracy that sought the life of the king. Discovery brought retribution that involved the innocent as well as the guilty. Relentless persecution did not entirely destroy their life. As late as 1431 severe measures were taken to repress another uprising. As a source of political trouble they disappeared in the struggles between the rival houses of Lancaster and York. The religious reform they started was taken over by men representing every rank in society. Colet, Erasmus, and More were the successors of Wiclif. We shall meet them again later on.



## CHAPTER VI.

MARTIN LUTHER. HIS BOYHOOD. STUDENT DAYS. MONASTIC LIFE AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES. VISIT TO ROME. PROFESSOR AT WITTENBERG UNIVERSITY.

Martin Luther was born at Eisleben, in Prussian Saxony, November 10, 1483. His father, John Luther, was a man of sturdy qualities of character. His hours of rest from arduous toil, as a miner and furnace owner, were largely given to reading, and his collection of books for the times was a very good one. Margaret (Lindemann), Luther's mother, we are told by Melanchthon, was considered a model woman worthy of the imitation of the mothers of the places where she resided. "Modesty, the fear of God, and devotion, especially marked her character." In less than six months after the birth of Martin his parents removed to Mansfield, a short distance from Eisleben. In speaking once of his boyhood days Luther said: "My parents were very poor. My father was a wood cutter, and my mother has often carried the wood on her back, that she might earn wherewith to bring us children up. They endured the hardest labor for our sakes." In time a measure of prosperity came to this home of high ideals, industry, and religious spirit. John Luther, as the owner of two small iron furnaces, became a man of influence in the community. Elected a member of the council of Mansfield he was brought in social contact with the leading men of the town and "the ecclesiastics and schoolmasters of the place," were often guests at his table.

While other children were born in this home it would appear that Martin held in the heart and thought, both of his father and mother, a place of ambitious solicitude and interest. A comment in his later life reveals the stern discipline that was characteristic in German homes in the Sixteenth Century. "My parents," says Luther, "treated me so severely at times that I became very timid. They truly thought they were doing right, but they failed in that discernment of character which is absolutely necessary, that we may know when, on whom, and how, punishment should be inflicted." If it is true that the "boy is father of the man," we can easily imagine that Martin was not an easy child to manage. Flogging appears, however, to have been the favorite method of discipline, as Luther tells us that the master of the school he attended in Mansfield whipped him fifteen times in one day. At this school he began his study of Latin grammar and was taught a part of the Catechism, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and various hymns and other reading matter.

Under the strict religious training of both home and school, the physically strong and mentally alert lad, made rapid progress in his studies, and his father resolved that no effort on his part should be spared to give his son the advantages of an education that would enable him to enter one of the learned professions. When he was fourteen he was sent to the school of the Franciscans at Magdeburg. He was accompanied with a boyhood companion, John Reinecke, who became a lifelong friend.

Luther, in the story he has left us of his boyhood days, gives us glimpses of the privations that were a part of his experiences. "I was accustomed," he says, "with my

companions to beg a little food to supply our wants. One day about Christmas time, we were going all together through the neighboring villages, from house to house, singing in concert the usual carols on the infant Jesus born at Bethlehem. We stopped in front of a peasant's house which stood detached from the rest at the extremity of the village. The peasant hearing us sing our Christmas carols, came out with some food which he meant to give us, and asked in a rough, loud voice, 'Where are you, boys?' Terrified at these words, we ran away as fast as we could. We had no reason to fear, for the peasant offered us this assistance in kindness; but our hearts were no doubt become fearful from the threats and tyranny which the masters then used towards their scholars, so that we were seized with sudden fright. At last, however, as the peasant still continued to call after us, we stopped, forgot our fears, ran to him, and received the food that he offered us. It is thus," continues the great Reformer in reminiscent mood, "that we tremble and flee when our conscience is guilty and alarmed. Then we are afraid even of the help that is offered us, and of those who are our friends, and wish to do us good."

Within a year Luther left Magdeburg and attended a well known school at Eisleben. He had relatives in this place, but evidently they gave him no especial assistance, and we find him again singing in the streets, with other school boys, to earn a morsel of bread. While this custom has survived in Germany even into modern times, it was a source of deep humiliation to the sensitive lad who little realized the honor with which the townsman of Eisleben would receive him in later years. A door soon opened that gave him a shelter from these experiences.

One day, after having been turned away with harsh words from several houses, he was about returning depressed and hungry to his lodgings. He stood for a moment, wondering if it was not best for him to give up the struggle to secure an education and earn a living in his father's employ as a miner at Mansfield. Just then the door of the house, in front of which he was standing, opened, and a kindly voice and hand beckoned him to enter.

This welcome from the wife of Conrad Cotta, a daughter of the burgomaster of Eilfeld, was the beginning of a friendship that brought relief and enabled Luther to continue his studies. Conrad no sooner became acquainted with the lad whom his wife had befriended than he urged him to make his house his home. A new life opened to the young scholar and with quickened interest he made rapid progress in his studies. It was at this time that his musical genius began to find expression. He learned to play on the flute and lute and the home of Conrad Cotta first enjoyed his mastery of the art that was to be the source of abiding pleasure, even to old age, of the future author of "Ein Feste Burg," and other beautiful German hymns, some of which have become the common heritage of Protestant homes of every land and language.

In after years, recalling the memories of his early school day privations, and his relief through the kindness and affection of the Cotta home, Luther writes: "Do not despise the boys who try to earn their bread by chanting before your door, 'bread for the love of God' (*Panimum propter Deum*). I have done the same. It is true that in later years my father maintained me at the University of Erfurth, with much love and kindness, supporting me

by the sweat of his brow ; but at one time I was only a poor mendicant. And now by means of my pen, I have succeeded so well, that I would not change fortunes with the Grand Seigneur himself. I may say more: if I were to be offered all the possessions of the earth heaped one upon another I would not take them in exchange for what I possess. And yet I should never have known what I do, if I had not been in school, and been taught to write."

These were happy boyhood days. Standing at the head in all his studies, he gave promise of those qualities of courage and leadership that marked his after life. Melanchthon, in his reminiscences of the student days of Luther, tells the story of his special esteem for one of his teachers, John Trebonius. Unlike his colleagues, Trebonius treated his scholars with deferential respect, going so far as to lift his hat and bowing to them as he passed them. This unusual action led one of his fellow teachers to inquire the reason for it. "There are," said Trebonius, "amongst these youths, some whom God will one day raise to the ranks of burgomasters, chancellors, doctors, and magistrates. Though you do not now see the outward signs of their respective dignities, it is yet proper to treat them with respect." The thought that prompted the Eisenach teacher to lift his hat to the miner's son of Mansfield has kept the memory of Trebonius green for four hundred years. It is pleasant also to recall the incident of later years when Conrad Cotta and his wife Ursala,—of whom Luther once said "there is nothing sweeter than the heart of a pious woman,"—sent one of their sons to be educated at the University of Witten-

berg, the then famous professor and preacher made him a welcome guest in his own home.

Naturally, John Luther was very proud of the reports that came to him of the position that his son had won at Eisenach. It was his fond dream that he should have the advantages of a university training and follow the profession of law. Already he was confident that his beloved son would in time "stand before princes," and win high official distinction. In 1501 Luther was enrolled as a student in the University of Erfurt. Scholastic philosophy at this time held the place of highest distinction in the curriculum of the university. With wonted energy Luther, now eighteen years old, entered upon the study of the philosophy found in the writings of Aquinas, Aristotle and other schoolmen. In these studies he became dissatisfied not only with their logic but imbibed a dislike, especially of Aristotle, that aroused through his entire life the most vehement dissent and condemnation. He found relief from this dreary course of philosophy in studying Cicero, Virgil, and other classics, with a thoroughness that made him a master of style and the use of language. His attainments were such, says Melancthon, that "the whole university admired his genius."

During the four years that Luther pursued his studies at Erfurt he passed through spiritual experiences that changed the entire current of his life and the plans which were the day dreams and hope of his father. His early religious home training marked, as we have seen, by rigorous methods of discipline, was followed in his early school days by disquietude of feeling that disclosed a conscience keenly alive to personal need and delinquencies. During his student days at Erfurt in great soul loneliness



he passed through mental and spiritual conflicts that brought him finally to decisions that were indeed for him and after history "the parting of the ways." It was at this time that the Bible first came into his hands. He had already been in the university two years when in looking through the books in its library he found what was then a rare volume—a complete copy of the Scriptures. Up to this period he had supposed that the whole of the revealed word of God was contained in the portions of the gospels and epistles which the Church had selected to be read in the churches and places where its members assembled for worship. This new found book Luther returned to read and reread. In preparation for his bachelor's degree overwork brought on a severe illness that threatened a fatal termination. Among his visitors was an aged priest who had followed the career of the brilliant student with deep interest. Luther expressed his fear that he would not recover. "Take courage," said the aged friend, "you will not die this time. Our God will yet make you His instrument in comforting many others. For God lays His cross upon those whom He loves, and those who bear it patiently gain much wisdom." It was a word in season and acted as a healthful tonic. With restored health came a season of more gracious spiritual hope. In 1505 he was made master of arts and was appointed a teacher of various branches of philosophy.

The sudden death of an intimate college friend led to serious questionings as to his future. A loyal son of the Church, his mind, under the inspiration that had come through his discovery and study of the Bible, now raised the question as to his choice of vocation in life. He un-



derstood full well the desires and ambition of his father who had toiled early and late that his gifted son might be equipped to win official and legal honors. But the question constantly confronted Luther in his waking thoughts. Ought he not to dedicate his life to God and the Church? From an earthly standpoint there were many things, beside the wish of his father, that were calculated to dissuade him from turning aside from long cherished plans. Religion in its ecclesiastical activities and human representatives had fallen into low repute in the minds of many thoughtful men and women. John Luther was a type of an increasing number of laymen who despised the idle life which was led by a large majority of the priests, and sharply criticized conditions that revealed ecclesiastical misdoing and corruption in high, as well as low, official Church places.

During these days of acute mental and spiritual questionings Luther spent his vacation in Mansfield. On his return journey to Erfurt he was overtaken by a severe summer storm. A lightning bolt struck so near him that he was thrown to the ground. In the terror of the moment, "encompassed" as he afterwards said, "with the anguish and terror of death," he then and there made the vow to forsake the world and devote his life to the service of God. As one of his associates at the university (Rubianus), long afterwards wrote to him: "Divine Providence foresaw what you would one day become, when, on your return from your parents, the fire of heaven struck you to the ground, like another Paul, near the city of Erfurt, and separating you from us led you to join the Augustine order."

In the loneliness of a personal weighing of contending interests Luther came to the decision to take upon himself monastic vows and in the seclusion of an Augustine convent renounce the world and seek in its quiet the spiritual peace for which he longed with the strength of his fervid nature. In reaching this decision the youthful professor of Erfurt appears not to have taken any friend into his confidence, and even his parents were ignorant of his purpose. Then, as always, when Martin Luther after prayerful thought, resolved upon a course of action and "laid his hand to the plow," he never stopped to look back. After an evening spent in joyous companionship with a group of college friends he made known to them his intention. Before the morning dawned he left his lodgings, with two volumes selected from his library, Virgil and Plautus, and entered the convent of the hermits of St. Augustine. Luther's friends were amazed at his action. His father received the tidings with a spirit of condemnation that disclosed how completely his strong nature had become absorbed in his hopes and ambitions as they centered about the future career of the son for whose education he had made such great sacrifices.

It was a cruel blow to the Mansfield counsellor who detested the idle and corrupt lives of a large proportion of the monks of whom he had knowledge. In an outburst of angry grief he penned a letter to Martin in which he declared him disinherited from his thought and love. Some months later his feeling was changed by a sorrow that overwhelmed him in the sudden death by a prevailing epidemic, of two of his younger sons. Just at this time a report found circulation that the monk of Erfurt was dead. "If the report is not true," said one of John Lu-

ther's friends, "at least sanctify your present affliction by consenting that your son should be a monk." "Well be it so," replied the broken-hearted father, "and God grant that he may be prospered." Luther tells us that after his happy reconciliation with his honored and beloved father he was at one time relating the incident of the storm and the lightning stroke that laid him prostrate and brought about the experience that decided him to enter a convent. "God grant," said the still unreconciled foe of idle and dissolute priests, "that you may not have mistaken a delusion of the devil for a sign from heaven."

After the usual fashion, on entering the monastery at Erfurt, Luther changed his name to that of Augustine. In later years, referring to this action, he said: "What can be more mad and impious than to renounce one's Christian name for the sake of a cowl! It is thus the popes are ashamed of their Christian names, and show thereby that they are deserters from Jesus Christ."

Luther's life in the convent in its opening days was filled with humiliating experiences. While the monks were overjoyed at receiving into their fellowship the talented young teacher of the university, at the same time, they evidently took a low, human pleasure, in imposing upon him the most menial duties. Among these tasks was the opening and shutting of the gates; winding the clock; sweeping the church; and cleaning the rooms. Probably the most distasteful work was that of going through the streets of the city, where he had been highly honored in many ways, bearing a bread bag and begging from house to house for food to feed the lazy monks who urged this duty upon him. He endured it all without a murmur, but the day of deliverance was drawing near.

The spirit of meekness in which he met this trial of faith and patience attracted the attention of the prior of the convent and Luther was set free from these menial tasks and bidden to give his time to the studies he so much loved.

The works of St. Augustine and the early Fathers of the Church were his favorite reading. In the convent there was a copy of the Bible fastened to its place by a chain; more and more he became absorbed in its study. A brother in the convent, of eminent ability as a scholar, aided him in gaining a mastery both of Greek and Hebrew. All unconsciously he was preparing himself to give to the German people the great translation of the Word of God, that was to be a living power through coming centuries in molding the intellectual and spiritual life of German homes and the national institutions, civil, educational, and religious, that sprang out of them.

Living a severe ascetic life, Luther sought by every possible denial, to secure peace of soul and mind. "Verily," he once wrote to his friend Duke George of Saxony, "I was a devout monk, and followed the rules of my order so strictly, that I cannot tell you all. If ever a monk entered into heaven by his monkish merits, certainly I should have obtained an entrance there. All the monks who know me will confirm this; and if it had lasted much longer, I should have become literally a martyr, through watchings, prayer, reading and other labours."

That tenderness of conscience that had marked the character of Luther in his boyhood and student days, became even more keenly active amid the studies and meditations of his convent seclusion from worldly affairs and ambitions. Assailed by fears regarding his own worthi-

ness, he was tossed hither and thither on a stormy sea of conflicting emotions. "When during the time I was a monk," he tells us, "I felt temptations assail me. I am a lost man, thought I. Immediately I resorted to a thousand methods to appease the reproaches of my heart. I confessed every day. But all that was of no use. Then, overwhelmed with dejection, I distressed myself by the multitude of my thoughts. See, said I to myself, thou art envious, impatient, passionate: therefore wretch that thou art! it is of no use to thee to have entered into this holy order."

With such flagellations of spirit and ascetic habits the young monk broke down under the physical and mental strain. One day a friend found him lying apparently lifeless upon the floor of his room. Not responding to the voice that sought to bring him to consciousness, Edemberger asked some of the convent choristers to sing a hymn. The stricken monk responded to the strain of the melody he loved and strength and consciousness gradually returned. In these days of spiritual conflict and assiduous study of the Bible and the writings especially of St. Augustine, there came to his help a friendship that was to have a large providential place in his preparation for his great life work. This friend, like himself, had sought the seclusion of a monk's cell and in its retirement had devoted himself to learning. Of noble birth, John Staupitz by his scholarly gifts, spiritual mindedness, and genial manners, had already attracted the favorable regard of men of high station and official influence. The Elector of Saxony, Frederic the Wise, became his close friend and adviser. Under his patronage and support he became the chief founder of the University of Witten-

berg and filled the position of professor of divinity. He had early discovered the secret of the Christian life. Temperamentally more quiet and equable than Luther he had found the pathway of faith in Christ that had brought soul peace and joy. Honored and beloved, Staupitz had been appointed Vicar-General of the Augustines for all Germany. This election gave proof that there were still those in high official places who were deeply impressed with the need of stringent reforms in monastical affairs and administration. His friend, the Elector of Saxony, and others, knew that Staupitz was deeply grieved over the prevalent corruption in the Church that were patent to every thoughtful observer: gross sins, that were the source of growing discontent and hostile criticism on the part even of the lowliest members of the laity in the towns and rural sections of Germany.

Very early in his visitations of the convent at Erfurt Staupitz made the acquaintance of Luther. Their friendship grew apace and Luther opened his inmost heart to his spiritually minded superior. "If you wish to be truly converted," said Staupitz, "do not depend upon mortifications and penances. Love Him who has first loved you." As Luther pondered upon these words the light began to break upon his path. Staupitz presented him with a copy of the Bible with the admonition that was scarcely needed: "Let the study of the Scriptures be your favorite occupation."

During the second year of his convent life Luther suffered from a severe illness that was attended with great mental depression. An aged monk, to whom Luther opened his heart, proved a messenger of spiritual hope. Recalling the Apostles' Creed he reminded his younger



brother of the article: "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." "I do believe," said Luther, "the remission of sins." "Ah," said his wise confidant and friend, "you must not only believe that David's or Peter's sins are forgiven; the devils believe that. The commandment of God is that we believe our own sins are forgiven." With these words he repeated a passage from one of St. Bernard's sermons. "The testimony which the Holy Ghost applies to your heart is this: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.'" It was a word in due season. Trusting in Christ and His atoning grace the young monk found rest. The clouds of depression lifted and health, both physical and spiritual, was restored. At the close of his two years' novitiate Luther was ordained as priest. His father accepted his son's urgent invitation to be present and he was asked to suggest the date that was finally fixed for May 2, 1507.

Following his consecration Luther made frequent visits to the parishes and convents in the neighborhood of Erfurt and early disclosed his gifts as a preacher. It was through the influence of Staupitz that in 1508 he was appointed professor at the University at Wittenberg. He did not cease to be a monk and he had his home in the convent of the Augustines where a cell was assigned to him. He taught physics and dialectics. Writing to his friend, John Braun, the curate of Eisenach, he says: "I am very well, by God's favor, but that I am compelled to give my whole attention to philosophy. From the moment of my arrival at Wittenberg I have longed to exchange that study for theology, I mean that theology which seeks the kernel of the nut, the pulp of the wheat, the marrow of the bone." Indefatigable in his studies Luther became master of Greek and Hebrew that he



might better understand the Bible that was to him the fountain of life. At an early date (March, 1509,) he received the degree of bachelor of divinity, and began a series of daily lectures explanatory of the Psalms and the Epistle to the Romans. It was in the hours of preparation for these discourses that the doctrine of justification by faith found strong lodgment in his thought and experience.

The teaching of the young professor attracted attention beyond his class-room. Among those who came to hear the comments of Luther on the letters of St. Paul was Martin Pollich, an eminent doctor of philosophy, who had aided Staupitz in the founding of Wittenberg University. He was deeply impressed with the originality and spiritual insight with which Luther opened up the "riches of grace" in the writings of the great apostle. "This monk," he prophesied, "will put all the doctors to rout; he will introduce a new style of doctrine, and will reform the whole Church; he builds upon the word of Christ; and no one in this world can either resist or overthrow that word, though it should be attacked with all the weapons of philosophers and sophists."

Staupitz invited Luther to preach in the church of the Augustines. He shrank from this responsibility, but his friend would not be denied. "It will be the death of me," protested Luther. "I could not stand it three months." "And what then," said Staupitz. "In God's name so be it; for in heaven also the Lord requires devoted and able servants."

The services at this time, while the church building was in process of erection, were held in a temporary wooden chapel. The pulpit was on a raised platform of

planks and the walls of the room were propped on each side to save them from falling. Amid these rude surroundings the reformation messages of Luther were first proclaimed. One of his contemporaries (Raymond), who was his active opponent in after years, placed on record this testimony as to the genius and power of Luther as a preacher: "Gifted with a ready and lively intelligence, having a retentive memory, and speaking his mother tongue with remarkable fluency, Luther was surpassed in eloquence by none of his contemporaries. Addressing his hearers from his place in the pulpit, as if he had been agitated by some powerful passion, and adapting his action to the words, he affected their minds in a surprising manner, and carried them like a torrent whither he would."

The congregations soon overflowed the rude wooden chapel, and the council of Wittenberg invited him to preach in the city cathedral. His fame as a speaker spread rapidly and the Elector of Saxony came one day to hear him, and sealed by his presence and interest the universal praise of his discourses.

In 1510,—some say a little later,—an opportunity came to Luther to visit Rome on an official errand of importance. It was, for him and the world, a journey that ended in decisions that were to aid mightily in changing the course of history and revitalizing the spirit and teachings of Christianity and the Church of which Christ is the Head. Luther no doubt hoped as he drew near the capital city of the "Holy Catholic Church," that he would find a simplicity and purity of life in the monasteries and higher ecclesiastical circles, far greater than in the German towns where his life had been spent. In this he was

sadly disappointed. He found the tables of the Benedictine order in northern Italy spread with the choicest viands. Beautifully furnished apartments, rich dresses, and luxuries of every sort marked the surroundings of a convent life that fostered indolence and vice in every sensual form.

During an illness that overtook Luther before he reached the gates of the Imperial City he found help in the midst of depressing anxieties as the Gospel promise like a heavenly message came to his relief, "The just shall live by faith." Rome, upon her seven hills, impressed his strong emotional nature with thoughts that in minor key have stirred the hearts of countless throngs of pilgrims and travellers. Julius II. was at this time upon the pontifical throne; a man whose profane contempt of sacred things is disclosed in the oath he uttered when tidings were brought to him that his army had been defeated by the French before Ravenna. In anger throwing the prayer book, from which he was reading, upon the floor, he exclaimed with an impious curse, "Well, now thou art become a Frenchman—Is it thus thou guardest the Church?" Turning in the direction of the mountain fastnesses from whose arms he looked for help, he cried out: "Holy Swiss. Pray for us."

We must not forget that Luther was still a loyal Catholic. He said mass several times while in Rome. Deeply pained and shocked at evidence that confronted him on every side, bearing witness to the corrupt lives of the Roman clergy and the unworthy character of many dignitaries of the Church, he still hoped and prayed that deliverance might come from these conditions by spiritual

forces, cleansing and removing these evils from within its corporate life.

While bearing testimony that in places where the word of God was faithfully dispensed peace and good order prevailed he afterwards said in an address to the Nobility of Germany: "It is incredible what sins and atrocities are committed in Rome; they must be seen and heard to be believed. So that it is usual to say, 'If there be a hell, Rome is built above it; it is an abyss from whence all sins proceed.'" At another time with the keen thrust of his genius, in sarcastic comment upon the sins of evil doers, he remarked: "The nearer we approach to Rome, the greater number of bad Christians do we find. It is commonly observed, that he who goes to Rome for the first time, goes to seek a knave there; the second time he finds him; and the third time he brings him away with him under his cloak. But now, people are become so clever, that they make the three journeys in one."

Luther did not in his experiences at Rome lose his faith in Christ and His Church. *That* became more fixed. Under the tutelage of a celebrated rabbi he pursued the study of Hebrew and thus was better equipped for the great work of translating the Bible into his native tongue. We cannot omit the familiar story of the day when in the spirit of penitence that had not yet cast aside monkish fears and superstitions he climbed, on bended knees, what is known as Pilate's staircase. While engaged in this exercise, Luther tells us, that a voice like that of thunder echoed through the chambers of his heart saying, "The just shall live by faith." It was this voice with which we have become familiar in following the life of the student of Magdeburg, the scholar and monk of Erfurt, and the

professor and preacher of Wittenberg. It was the "old, old" message that had brought peace to untold multitudes since the day of Pentecost. A message lost to a great extent in the darkness of the Middle Ages, but found again in the devout heart out of which was to burst forth the triumphal strains of "Ein Feste Burg" and other great hymns of the Reformation. With the message of the Gospel ringing in his ears, the thought of the superstitious degradation of his action came upon him with a force that broke the shackles in which early education, monkish training, and the traditions of the Church of Rome had bound him. His spiritual struggles had not yet come to an end but the light was breaking in the dawning of a new day in which he was to hold so commanding a position and influence. Luther returned to Wittenberg, disillusionized, disappointed and disgusted with what he had learned from personal knowledge of the inner life and corruption of the papal court.

Staupitz did not lose sight of his friend. "It seemed," says D'Aubigné, "as if the Vicar-general had a presentiment of the work that was to be accomplished in the world, and that finding it too hard for him, he desired to urge Luther to undertake it. Nothing is more remarkable, or perhaps more inexplicable, than the character of the man who was ever ready to impel the monk onward in the path to which God called him, and yet himself went and ended his days sadly in a convent." The Elector Frederick, and other friends, decided that Luther had won the right to the distinction of doctor of divinity. Staupitz was entrusted with the pleasant errand of consulting with Luther in regard to this promotion that carried with it higher responsibilities in the work of the uni-

versity. Luther was deeply touched by the proffer of this unexpected honor. His first thought, however, constrained him to decline the duties that he recognized would fall upon him. His fears as to his worthiness, and his health, were finally overcome by the pleas of Staupitz, and the assurance that friends would provide the money necessary to meet the expenses connected with his promotion. From this hour Luther became a marked man and recognized leader. Little did he realize the tempestuous sea upon which he had embarked. But it was a strong, tried hand that laid hold of the tiller, that with the blessing of God, was to guide and control his course. Luther with wonted enthusiasm took up the duties of his doctorate. His onslaughts on the philosophy of Aristotle and his sturdy defense of the Pauline writings and the theology of Augustine, attracted wide attention. He became, for a time, the friend and defender of Erasmus, and kept up an ever extending correspondence with the strong group of men in the universities of Europe who felt that the hour had arrived for the reformation of corrupt practices and the elimination of wicked ecclesiastical leadership within the Church they still loved and longed to see purified.

At this period another friend, George Spalatin, came into the circle of comrades gathering about Luther to fill a place of special influence by the assistance he rendered in many ways to the great Reformer. From this time on we shall discover that it was "team work," represented in the coöperative labors and sacrifice of men differing in gifts, but impelled by a common purpose, that made the leadership of Luther successful and opened the era of Protestant Church history. Spalatin was a born diplo-



mat. The friend of noblemen, scholars, and men in every rank of society, his position as secretary and chaplain of the Elector, Frederic the Wise, enabled him to exercise an influence quiet and unobtrusive in character, that was at times of vital importance.

In addition to theological discussions, that stirred up deep resentment in many quarters, Luther gave special attention to his lectures to the students who thronged his lecture room. Melancthon tells us, that "He so explained the Scriptures, that, in the judgment of all pious and enlightened men, it was as if a new light had arisen on the doctrine after a long and dark night. He pointed out the difference between the Law and the Gospel. He refuted that error, then predominant in the Church and schools, that men, by their own works, obtain remission of sins, and are made righteous before God by an external discipline. He thus brought back the hearts of men to the Son of God. Like John the Baptist, he pointed to the Lamb of God who had taken away the sins of the world. He explained that sin is freely pardoned on account of God's Son, and that man receives this blessing through faith. He in no way interfered with the usual ceremonies. The established ceremonies had not, in all his order, a more faithful observer and defender. But he labored more and more to make all understand the grand essential doctrines of Conversion; of the forgiveness of Sins; of Faith; and of the true consolations of the Cross. Pious souls were attracted and penetrated by the sweetness of this doctrine; the learned received it joyfully. One might have said that Christ and His Apostles and Prophets had come forth from darkness or from some impure dungeon." (*D'Aubigné.*)



It was in these days that Luther found himself, in many points, out of sympathy with Erasmus, whose courage in boldly attacking the sins of the Papal Court and the corruptions of monasterial life, he admired as well as his erudition and ability as a scholar and student of the Bible. As a younger group of men of university training gathered about him Luther sought to guide them into action that made them public defenders of the Christian faith. One of these disciples, Bernard of Feldkirchen, maintained principles, endorsed by Luther, in a disputation that attracted much attention. Bernard was a professor in the university and five years later was the first among the German priests who condemned the celibate life by entering into the married state.

The Elector having erected a new church in Wittenberg commissioned Staupitz to collect relics to be placed within its walls. The Vicar-general made Luther his representative during his absence. In his visitation of the large number of monasteries in all this region of Germany he saw much that saddened his heart and demanded reform. He did not fail to raise his voice in condemnation of these evils. Many responded to his eloquent and earnest appeals and it was from these very monasteries that some of the most ardent advocates of Christian faith came forth to aid Luther and his fellow reformers. So great was the interest aroused during the year 1516, in which this visitation was made, that it has been called "the Morning Star of the Reformation." Luther had now come to a position of commanding influence. His fame as a pulpit orator brought to him an invitation from Duke George of Saxony to preach in the chapel of the castle at Dresden. He chose as his text the gospel of the

day (Mat. 20:20). It was one of his great discourses on his favorite theme; the assurance of salvation through faith. It made a deep impression. Some found in its message the way of "peace," others received its Augustinian doctrines with unconcealed dissatisfaction. The battle was on in which Martin Luther was to give leadership that has placed his name among the few men of the ages whose name and fame can never be lost in the **annals of time.**

## CHAPTER VII.

### PROMULGATION OF THE THESES AGAINST INDULGENCES.

We now stand upon the threshold of the year (1517) that has come to be recognized as the opening date of the Protestant Reformation. It was the year in which Luther confronted the Roman Catholic Church and its entrenched civil and ecclesiastical power.

This conflict came to its first battle issue out of action authorized and encouraged by the Papal Court, at whose head stood Leo X. Needing money to help a nephew in his ambitious schemes the Pope offered for sale indulgences that granted pardons for every conceivable sin and crime. He gave as the ostensible reason for this traffic the desire to secure funds to complete the building of St. Peter's Church at Rome. The traffic in these indulgences was placed in the hands of John Tetzel, a Dominican monk whose life of wretched and criminal profligacy would have come to an early close had the command of the Emperor Maximillian been carried out in an order that was issued that he should be sewed up in a sack and thrown into the river. As early as 1502, Tetzel acted as an agent for the sale of indulgences. For this service he received a large salary and an allowance that enabled him to move about the country in almost regal state. With his carriage drawn by three horses, with their outriders, his entrance into the towns of Germany was attended with great outward pomp and hypocritical religious ceremony. A Jesuit historian tells us that Tetzel and his companions "did not fail to distort

their subject, and so to exaggerate the value of the indulgences as to lead the people to believe that as soon as they gave their money, they were certain of salvation and of the deliverance of souls from purgatory."

"The first benefit we announce," said these agents appointed by command of the Pope, "is the complete pardon of all sins; and it is not possible to speak of any greater benefit than this, since man who lives in sin is deprived of the divine favor, and by this complete pardon he recovers the grace of God. Now we affirm, that to obtain these great blessings, it is only necessary to purchase an indulgence. And as to those who desire to deliver souls from purgatory, and to procure for them forgiveness of all their sins, let them put money in the chest; but it is not needful that they should feel sorrow of heart, or make confession with their lips. Let them only hasten to bring their money, for they will thus do a work most profitable to departed souls and to the building of the church of St. Peter."

The sacrilegious traffic of Tetzal was carried on in the most ostentatious manner. The counter was placed by the side of an uplifted cross and men and women poured their money into the boxes. The amount demanded was graduated by capacity to pay. Tetzal refused to sell an indulgence to a wealthy woman in Magdeburg for less than one hundred florins. Her confessor, a Franciscan priest, when informed of this extortionate demand, said: "God gives us remission of sins freely. He does not sell it." These words were reported to Tetzal, who angrily exclaimed: "Such an adviser deserves to be expelled or burnt alive."

In his history of the Reformation, D'Aubigné tells the story of a Saxon gentleman who heard Tetzel utter his blasphemous harangue at Leipsic. "He went to the monk, and inquired if he was authorized to pardon sins in intention, or such as the applicant intended to commit. 'Assuredly,' answered Tetzel. 'I have full power from the Pope to do so.' 'Well,' returned the gentleman, 'I want to take some slight revenge on one of my enemies, without attempting his life. I will pay you ten crowns if you will give me a letter of indulgence that shall bear me harmless.' Tetzel made some scruples; they struck their bargain for thirty crowns. Shortly after the monk set out from Leipsic. The gentleman attended by his servants, laid wait for him in a wood between Jüterboch and Treblin,—fell upon him, gave him a beating, and carried off the rich chest of indulgence money the inquisitor had with him. Tetzel clamored against this act of violence, and brought an action before the judges. But the gentleman showed the letter signed by Tetzel himself which exempted him beforehand from all responsibility. Duke George, who, had at first been much irritated at this action, upon seeing this writing, ordered that the accused should be acquitted."

As the sale of indulgences went merrily on with an increasing wave of crime following in the wake of this horrible traffic, general indignation was aroused on the part of decent Christian men and women. Leading bishops and worthy priests and monks made their quiet but earnest protest in private circles. Not one of them dared to condemn these evil practices in a public way. They knew too well the power of Rome and the relentless punishment that followed disobedience or even criticism

of its mandates. The man whom God had appointed for this hour was ready for his great task. From the day that Luther entered the convent at Erfurt, out of soul struggles that brought him, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the light of a once more opened Bible, into an experience of spiritual peace and hope, there had been intensified within his strong nature a growing dissatisfaction and condemnation of evils that were making the Church and its institutions a source of corrupt life and influence. The facts of the case were undeniable. Christianity under the leadership of Rome was losing its hold upon all classes of men. Luther lamented the situation. He loved the Church as the Bride of Christ. He had dedicated himself to its service and expected to live and die in its communion. But Rome, and all the baneful influences that flowed from the Papal city with its mighty power, became more and more abhorrent to him and the choice group of Christian teachers and leaders that stood near him in Wittenberg. Something must be done to rescue the Church from the corrupt and evil forces that threatened its life.

The miserable travesty of the practice of Indulgences that had "pervaded the whole penitential system of the later medieval Church and that had done so from the Thirteenth Century," was to be the point where the match was lighted that set Europe on fire and ushered in the Protestant Reformation. Luther understood full well the theological hair splitting distinctions by which the doctrine of indulgences was upheld, but he saw that the mass of the people did believe that Tetzel handed to them, in exchange for their hard earned gold and silver coins, a paper that absolutely removed the guilt of sin.

Luther when he prepared his famous Theses paid little attention to theological definitions. "They are simply ninety-five sturdy strokes struck at a great ecclesiastical abuse which was starving the consciences of many."<sup>1</sup>

As Luther strode down the long river side street of Wittenberg, that fateful October afternoon, four hundred years ago, with hammer and manuscript in hand, he was followed by the gaze of a multitude who admired him as the most eloquent preacher of his time, the great scholar, the fearless advocate of reform in high places and low places. They could not know; even Luther himself could not know, the far reaching influence of his act that day. But to himself, and to other thoughtful men and women in Wittenberg, there must have come a feeling that the hour was one of epoch making significance. In humble peasant homes, in cloister cells, in palace halls, prayers were offered that night that God was to answer in the unfolding of a fresh chapter in the history of Christianity and the world.

<sup>1</sup>Lindsay. History of the Reformation, Vol. I, p. 228.



## CHAPTER VIII.

THE OPENING OF THE CONFLICT WITH ROME. CRISIS  
YEARS IN THE LIFE OF LUTHER. 1517—1520.

"That Luther has a fine genius," laughingly remarked Leo Tenth, when he learned of the action of the young Wittenberg professor in posting his Theses against indulgences on the Palace Church of Wittenberg.

Little did Leo realize that the vast superstructure of prelatical power, that had slowly risen out of the life of the Middle Ages, was to be shaken to its very foundations by dynamic forces that were exploded by the hammer blows of the despised German monk. Little did Luther realize the tasks that lay before him and the wonderful way in which the divine promise was to be fulfilled in the bestowal of help for each day and every crisis hour. Only a man of rare gifts of head and heart, sustained by unusual physical strength, could have endured the fret and strain of the burdens of care and leadership that fell to the lot of the great reformer. Royal gifts of mind and physique were his heritage in a remarkable degree, but it is in the lonely spiritual struggles of the monastery cell, the assiduous study of the Bible, and an intellect and conscience, clear visioned and courageous, that we discover the secret of Luther's power and leadership, when the hour of destiny called him to his appointed work. To what extent in the autumn of 1517 he realized conditions that swiftly unfolded after his indictment of the sale of indulgences, we cannot know. This we know, that he was keenly alive to all the signs of the times. The universities

that had been founded in England and on the continent were crowded with restless throngs of students who were the constant bearers of tidings regarding the work and prevailing tempter of these centres of intellectual life. That temper was one of reform and reaction from the methods and philosophy of the schoolmen. The torch of truth, lighted by Wiclif and Huss, had been passed on by faithful hands and was ready for use in starting a conflagration that was to illumine the skies of all Europe and destroy much of the "stubble" and debris of corrupt ecclesiastical institutions that were Anti-Christ in spirit and structure. The activities of the young Oxford teachers—Colet, Erasmus and More—must have been the source of keen interest in the discussions of the cloisters of Wittenberg. Luther at this time was in correspondence with Erasmus and hailed the publication of his translation of the Greek New Testament with delight. With increasing indignation against evils that had culminated in Tetzels horrible traffic, he watched the beginnings of a struggle that sought to throw off the shackles of an outworn but still grievous heritage of feudalistic bondage; secure national independency; and win freedom from the secular and spiritual sway of Rome.

It was not as a lonely reformer that Luther nailed his theses against indulgences, upon the door of the Castle Church. He understood full well that this courageous act would meet with a silent but heartfelt response in multitudes of lowly German homes. He was assured that his associates in the university and most of the leading officials of Saxony, headed by their beloved Elector, were in sympathy with the reforms which he advocated. In a general way he realized that there was a stirring of

popular feeling that, if fused into united action, would carry dismay into the counsels of the impious ecclesiastical leaders at Rome, whose sole ambition was to gratify their selfish and sensual tastes and jealously guard their entrenched hierarchical power. With that lofty spiritual courage that animated Cromwell as he led the Puritan army on the fateful field of Nasby, Luther was the great commanding personality that led the reforming hosts of Germany and other lands with the Psalmist's battle cry, "Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered."

October thirty-first, 1517, was indeed an epoch making day. "Luther's denunciation of Indulgences," Froude has eloquently said, "became, like the brazen serpent in the wilderness, the sign to which the sick spirits throughout the western world looked hopefully and were healed. In all those millions of hearts the words of Luther found an echo, and flew from lip to lip, from ear to ear. The thing which all were longing for was done, and in two years from that day there was scarcely perhaps a village from the Irish Channel to the Danube in which the name of Luther was not familiar as a word of hope and promise. Then rose a common cry for guidance. Books were called for—above all things, the greatest book of all, the Bible. Luther's inexhaustible fecundity flowed with a steady stream, and the printing presses in Germany and in the Free Towns of the Netherlands, multiplied Testaments and tracts in hundreds of thousands. Printers published at their own expense as Luther wrote. The continent was covered with disfrosted monks who had become the pedlars of these precious wares; and as the contagion spread, noble young spirits from other countries, eager themselves to fight in God's battle, came

to Wittenberg to learn from the champion who had struck the first blow at their great enemy how to use their weapons." "Students," says Michelet, "from all nations came to Wittenberg, to hear Luther and Melanchthon. As they came in sight of the town they returned thanks to God with clasped hands; for from Wittenberg, as heretofore from Jerusalem, proceeded the light of evangelical truth, to spread thence to the uttermost parts of the earth." This picture drawn by the master hand of one of our great modern historians vividly delineates conditions that prevailed during the three years that preceded the burning of the Pope's Bull by Luther in the presence of an immense concourse that gathered on the banks of the Elbe. (December 10, 1520.)

At this point a backward look over ten centuries will help us better to understand the impending conflict that gave birth to Evangelical Christianity as represented to-day by world wide Protestantism. The barbarian invasion of the Fifth Century while it broke the Roman empire into fragments did not destroy the Church. Its teachings were carried by faithful and devout ministers, clothed with priestly authority, into every land that had been conquered by Rome and knit together by its magnificent system of roads. These heralds of the Christian faith did not falter in the face of dangers, even unto death, to convey the story of Redemptive love into the forest huts of Germany and the rude hovel homes of Britain. Then, as ever, it wrought salvation. A new civilization emerged out of the life of Teutonic races that had heretofore developed only pagan, brute strength. Before the uplifted Cross these men reverently bowed and became obedient to its sway. The Church, under the

guidance of ambitious ecclesiastical leaders, was in the untutored thought of the rude races of the North and the more cultured races of the South, the embodiment of imperial power that lifted it above the authority of princes and emperors. The coronation of Charlemagne in 800 witnessed the complete triumph of this imperialistic conception of the Church that had been diligently fostered by the papacy from the time Rome was separated from the Eastern Church, and the ancient capital of the Cæsars became the seat of the papal power. When Otto was crowned in 962, the Holy Roman Empire came into an existence that did not cease until the opening of the Nineteenth Century. From the coronation of Otto I, for three centuries history centres about the relation of the Empire to the Papacy. During the first hundred of these years the pope and emperor were acclaimed sovereigns with coördinate powers. Then followed a period of humiliation for the popes that was again reversed by influences that gave them leadership in the days of the Crusades.

The Middle Ages are often called the Dark Ages. This is a misnomer. It is true that in these centuries, as in all centuries, the darkness of sin and ignorance cast heavy shadows over the life of humanity. Science and invention, as we now know them, were a sealed book, but brain power and heart power found wonderful expression in these centuries when Christianity was the main leavening life, in church and state, and a slowly emerging social order. We shall fail to gain a correct impression of the work wrought in these centuries if we dwell only on the evils and corruptions that threatened the very foundations of Christian faith and society, and that culminated

in the Protestant Revolution of the Sixteenth Century. The very fact of this Revolution gives abundant testimony that the Church of the Living God: the Church of which Christ is the Head; rested upon a sure foundation that could not be destroyed by the selfish ambitions and corrupt practices of papal courts, and palace halls.

Historians have dated the era of the Protestant Revolution from the latter half of the Fifteenth Century. Mohammedan power, that once threatened to overcome Southern Europe, had been broken and the Moors expelled from Spain. The Crusades, though they had failed in their purpose to dislodge the "Infidel" out of Jerusalem, "had awakened Europe to new life. East and West were brought nearer together. Knights and soldiers and pilgrims brought home from new lands new thoughts and wider notions." It was a spring time day in the history of Christianity and of the world. The discovery of the mariner's compass had given a new impetus to commerce. Adventurous sailors set sail for lands beyond the horizon that had long bounded their journeyings. Columbus was soon to realize his dreams in the discovery of a new world. The fall of Constantinople scattered the bands of Greek scholars who carried the New Learning to Italy and dropped the seed that sprang up with amazing rapidity in the "good ground" of more than thirty universities that had been founded in every part of Christendom. In these years we note "a succession of poets, painters, sculptors and historians such as had not been known for centuries." The opening chapters of a modern civilization were finding record. The old order was passing. The last to realize the change that was taking place was the Roman Church. The Church that thus far had been



the main representative of Christianity. Her ecclesiastical system had found its inspiration in the imperial structure reared by the Cæsars. Europe was divided into provinces at the head of which was an archbishop. They were obedient to the Pope and his cardinals in Rome. The archbishops were at the head of the bishops who controlled and ordained the parochical clergy. The monks, represented by the Dominican and Augustinian orders, had by the favor of the Popes become more powerful and influential than the parish clergy. The men who controlled this ecclesiastical system "held in their hands the keys, as it were, not only of heaven but of earth, they alone baptized: they alone married people (though unmarried themselves): they alone could grant divorce. They had charge of men on their death-beds: they alone buried, and could refuse Christian burial in the church yards. They alone had the disposition of the goods of deceased persons. When a man made a will it had to be proved in their ecclesiastical courts. If men disputed their claims, doubted their teaching, or rebelled from their doctrines, they virtually condemned them to the stake, by handing them over to the civil power, which acted in submission to their dictates." (*Seebohm.*)

In time the bequests of the dead brought immense revenues under the control of the clergy that were increased by the right they possessed to a tenth of all the produce of the land cultivated by a peasantry that groaned under the oppression of the feudal system that made their lot one of virtual slavery. The occupants of the monasteries that had been founded in almost every community, under the direct protection of the pope were exempted by ecclesiastical law, from civil responsibility. As their wealth



and revenues increased, multitudes of the monks became notorious for indolence and gross immorality. We must remember also that it was from the ranks of the clergy that men were called to act as ambassadors, prime ministers, envoys, diplomats and lawyers. Religion and its interests were subordinated to political machinations and selfish ambitions. At the head of this imperial, hierarchical system, stood the Pope. In the progress of the centuries the papal power had come to its culmination. This power, that arrogated supremacy both in the realm of spiritual and civil life, had been so misused and abused that in these opening days of the Sixteenth Century "it was notorious to every one living in Rome that the character of her Popes and the acts of the papal court were so evil, that she had become both politically and spiritually the centre of wickedness and rottenness in Europe and especially in Italy."

This desecration of a power that had won such complete obedience and acceptance, was the source of the revolt that changed the currents of history and gave a mighty impulse to the spirit of democracy that in its struggles against imperialistic power laid the foundations of that Evangelical Christianity that has given birth to republican ideals, institutions and governments.

In tracing the sources of the Protestant Reformation we must not forget that it was the internal corruption of the Roman Church, disclosed in the life of wicked popes and ambitious cardinals, flaunting their selfish and lustful pride of authority in the eyes of all Europe; dissolute monks and idle priests greedily fleecing the flocks which they controlled with abject fear and obedience: that created the feeling that broke out in the Revolution of

which Luther stands in history as the foremost leader. From the days of Huss until the dramatic hour when Luther, at the Diet at Worms, took his stand against Rome, the men—and they were a host—who mourned over conditions growing out of the action and sins of unworthy representatives of the Church they loved as the Body of Christ, desired and strove to bring about the reformation of these evils by changes wrought within its corporate life. For generations humble, devout Christian men and women, some of them dwellers in monasteries and nunneries, scholars and teachers in the universities, and the more thoughtful members of the laity, in an age in which feudalism imposed its imperious bondage, alike complained of the evils that had their fountain head in Rome. Dante had described the Popes of his generation as men

“whose avarice

O'ercasts the world with mourning, under foot

Treading the good, and raising bad men up.

Of Shepherds like to you, the Evangelist

Was aware, when her who sits upon the waves

With kings in filthy whoredom he beheld!”

The indictment of Petrarch is no less severe.

“Once Rome: now false and guilty Babylon!

Hive of deceits! Terrible prison,

Where the good doth die, the bad is fed and fattened!

Hell of the living!

Sad world that dost endure it: Cast her out!”

The Roman Church, as a human institution, was coming to a day of judgment that has not yet passed. The power that revealed its weakness and ushered in an era

that witnessed the victories of evangelical faith was the Truth of the revealed Word of God. This word, in its entirety, had been a sealed book for centuries but even a degenerate hierarchical church of imperialistic power while it might scatter the dust of Huss upon the waters of the Danube; exterminate his followers in Bohemia, and the Albigenses of Southern France, and light the cruel flames of the Inquisition, could not destroy the essential truth that was the life of Christianity. In the lessons of the Breviary, the hymns of Ambrose and Bernard, in the organ peals that lifted human voices echoing through the aisles and under the domes of the marvelous cathedrals that Christian art had filled with paintings that are still the world's treasures; men of intellectual power; devout women whose immaculate purity still shone in the life of palace halls, and rude hovels; teachers and ecclesiastics of devout and holy character: found the Christ and were His followers. Their prayers, their desires, were answered, not as they hoped in a purified Roman Catholic Church, but in the Protestant Reformation of the Sixteenth Century.

## CHAPTER IX.

### LUTHER'S BREAK WITH ROME. 1517—1520.

All Saints' day in 1517 found the great parish church of Wittenberg crowded with an audience, many of whom had already read the propositions regarding indulgences that Luther had posted on its door the previous afternoon. These statements he again repeated at this festival service. The whole matter might have aroused only local and neighborhood interest had not Tetzel and the Pope been aware that the young Wittenberg monk and professor was backed by strong influential parties. The Elector of Saxony stood in such relations to the Holy Roman Empire that he held a key position. A man of high ideals and Christian character he was in full sympathy with the attack made by Luther upon Tetzel and his nefarious traffic. It is said that the Elector, a few days after Luther posted his theses, had a dream in which he saw the writing on the door of the church which he had built, in letters so large that he could read them in his palace, eighteen miles distant. Wonderful to tell he also, in his dream, saw the pen that Luther used grow longer and longer until at last it reached Rome and almost upset the Pope's triple crown. Stretching out his hand to save it from falling he awoke!

The refusal of the Elector to allow Tetzel to enter his dominion, conveyed the story of Luther's courageous act to Rome under circumstances that stirred the Papal Court and made the incident the theme of conversation and discussion in the palaces, the universities and the homes of wealthy burghers and humble peasants.

We must not forget that the famous theses were not in the form of an attack but rather a criticism of the abuse of indulgences.

The assertions of the *Theses* were as follows :

i. An Indulgence is and can only be the remission of a merely ecclesiastical penalty ; the Church can remit what the Church has imposed ; it cannot remit what God has imposed.

ii. An Indulgence *can* never remit guilt ; the pope himself cannot do such a thing ; God has kept that in his own hands.

iii. It cannot remit the divine punishment for sin ; that also is in the hands of God alone.

iv. It can have no efficacy for souls in Purgatory ; penalties imposed by the Church can only refer to the living ; death dissolves them ; what the Pope can do for souls in Purgatory is by prayer, not by jurisdiction or the power of the keys.

v. The Christian who has true repentance has already received pardon from God altogether apart from an Indulgence, and does not need one ; Christ demands this true repentance from every one.

vi. The Treasury of Merits has never been properly defined ; it is hard to say what it is, and it is not properly understood by the people ; it cannot be the merits of Christ and of His saints, because these act of themselves and quite apart from the intervention of the pope ; it can mean nothing more than that the pope, having the power of the keys can remit ecclesiastical penalties imposed by the Church ; the true treasure-house of merits is the Holy Ghost of the grace and glory of God.

Luther had no thought at this time of withdrawing from the Church of his fathers. His soul was firm in the purpose and desire to do all that was in his power to cleanse it from the evils that threatened its life. He hoped to aid in bringing the Church back to the spirit and teachings of Augustine and the early Fathers. He had no conception, when he lighted the torch of Truth and disclosed the iniquities of the traffic endorsed by Rome, that its sparks would kindle the conflagration that soon spread all over Europe and Britain. From that epochal incident on the afternoon of October 31, 1517, events moved fast. Luther was soon to realize his providential mission and leadership.

In November (1517) the Elector Albrecht of Mayence sent a message to Rome denouncing the monk of Wittenberg as a promulgator of false doctrines and a seducer of the common people. As bishop of Albrecht he hastened to bring suit against the pernicious heretic "through Master John Tetzel." The suit was not pressed but the statements upon which it was based especially aroused the vigorous support of the Dominican order, of which Tetzel was a member. Cardinal Cajetan, the General of the order, took up the cudgels in behalf of the opinions so acutely criticized by Luther. Pope Leo X was wary and diplomatic. Through the head of the Augustinian order, with which Luther was connected, he sought to reach the Wittenberg heretic, in a conciliatory way. This effort only resulted in strengthening the convictions of Luther and giving wider dissemination to the views that had aroused the wrath of Tetzel and his fellow Dominicans. In this controversy Luther was sustained by Staupitz and the Elector of Saxony.

This was a heart-searching and testing period in the life of Luther, (1518—1519). In great loneliness of spirit, he was called also to walk in a path where old time friends passed him by. It was a season of reaction in the tide of popular feeling in the university and city that had buoyed him up and encouraged his action in attacking Tetzl. Again he fought over the old battle grounds of faith and doctrine, and came forth firm in convictions from which he never again swerved. In these days a comrade of noble and gentle spirit stood at his side. The wise Elector never listened to more providential advice than that which brought Melanchthon to Wittenberg, as professor of Greek (1518). A graduate of Heidelberg and Tübingen he was eminently fitted to become a leader of the "New Learning." His fame as a teacher crowded the university with an enthusiastic band of students who caught from him, not only the spirit of the Renaissance, but a love of the New Testament whose Christian principles were exemplified in his daily walk and conversation. The personality and courageous attitude of Luther had been one of the influences that decided Melanchthon to accept the invitation to Wittenberg. The friendship that existed between these two great men is one of the delightful idyls of the Reformation period. They were providentially fitted to supplement each others work in the heavy task that was laid upon them. In temperament Melanchthon was in every way the opposite of Luther but his gentle and sensitive nature, balanced by a well trained and scholarly judgment, furnished just the support that Luther needed. The hand and brain that drafted the Augsburg Confession was that of no ordinary man.



In this time of heated controversy Luther accepted the challenge of Eck to dispute with Carlstadt and himself, at Leipzig, on the papal supremacy. This disputation, held in June, 1519, was a turning point in Luther's career. Carlstadt had been connected with the university at Wittenberg since 1505 and, first as a teacher of philosophy and then of theology, had won a position of large influence. He was a pioneer in the Reformation movement and in some respects he stood, in these early years, in advance of Luther. But the free thinking spirit and lack of good judgment, that marked his entire life, did not permit any close friendship between these fellow teachers. They were at this time, in some sense, rivals in the leadership of affairs and opinions that made Wittenberg the Mecca of students who sympathized with their attacks on Roman supremacy.

Eck was a trained debater and profoundly versed in ecclesiastical tradition and history. In the discussion at Leipzig he is generally conceded to have won a dialectic victory over both Carlstadt and Luther. Historians have called attention to the bouquet of flowers that Luther held in his hand when he ascended the rostrum of this debate. Then, as always, the fragrance and beauty of garden blossoms were a source of pleasure that brought moments of rest into his storm-tossed life. His garden at Wittenberg was a means of delightful recreation and his correspondence with friends, of kindred taste, mingles suggestions and inquiries about garden seeds and tools, with weighty doctrinal and ecclesiastical discussions. Luther, as he walked among his flowers on his return from Leipzig, needed their cheer and beauty. Shaking off the depression that followed this seeming defeat by

the wily Dominican, he wrote an account of the Leipzig Disputation in the form of an appeal to his fellow countryman. In this appeal was gathered the strength of long maturing convictions crystalized with a white heat of thought into a message that met a popular response far beyond his expectations. The keynote of this message was that of the spiritual priesthood of all believers that permitted access, by direct approach, to the heart of Infinite Love. This message was followed by a veritable flood of literature, from his tireless pen, that bore him to a place of leadership that from this time on remained unchallenged.

Meanwhile the enemies of Luther were busy plotting schemes that induced the Pope to bring him to trial for "suspicion of heresy." Prierias, an official expert of the Curia, prepared the opinion upon which the proceedings were taken up. He was so well pleased with the arguments with which he assaulted the Theses of Luther that he immediately published them. This rude and weak "opinion," did little harm to Luther and provoked feeling in his favor. The citation was issued early in June (1518), but the official summons did not reach Wittenberg until August. Rome was evidently alarmed. Without giving Luther due time to make answer the Pope ordered Cardinal Cajetan to at once examine him and if he did not immediately recant, have him arrested and brought to Rome. In case of his escape no time was to be lost in excommunicating him and all who favored his opinions. It was a larger contract than Leo surmised. The good Elector stepped in front of his courageous Wittenberg professor and the plan failed. Luther met Cajetan at Augsburg under an assurance that he would

not be arrested, and the angry cardinal after a conference with the "German beast" had to admit that there was lack of dogmatic basis for condemning him as a heretic. Another plan was devised. In November the Pope issued a decretal, that, without mentioning the name of Luther, condemned his teachings as heretical. A trained diplomat, Karl von Miltiz, was sent to the court of Saxony with instructions to use every effort to secure the approval of the Elector to a scheme that would place Luther in the power of the Roman See. He quickly discovered that this was a futile errand, and decided to act the rôle of mediator.

Political motives played an important part in this sudden change of front in the treatment of Luther. The Emperor Maximilian, head of the Holy Roman Empire, had died in January, 1519. His grandson, Charles of Spain, and Francis I of France were the leading candidates for this exalted position. Leo X was bitterly opposed to the succession of Charles, and favored the claims of Francis. Realizing that there was little hope of the French king securing the coveted honor he favored a plan that brought forward the name of the Elector of Saxony. This situation made him anxious to hush up the Luther matter. It has even been surmised that Leo gave a diplomatic promise to the Elector that in case his Wittenberg protégé would obediently recant and make no further trouble he might be elevated to the cardinalate. Bribery and promises did not avail. A letter of Erasmus tells the story. When the imperial crown was offered to the noble Duke of Saxony he refused the honor and gave his influence in favor of Charles who was

elected emperor the following day and as such became head of the Holy Roman Empire.

The heresy trial was reopened. The Elector treated with disdain the threat of an interdict if he continued to aid Luther. His reply, framed in the courteous spirit that marked his noble character, firmly denied the power of the Curia to either excommunicate Luther or place his own lands under the interdict while the mediation ordered by Miltiz had not taken place. Rome made answer through a scurrilous address, given by an official that depicted the Elector in the blackest colors "as a raging, cruel tyrant, as the executioner of the clergy, the Apostolic See, indeed, the whole Christian religion, and finally even set him down as the twin head of the horrible Hydra Luther."<sup>1</sup>

In February (1520) a commission, consisting of two cardinals and several eminent theologians resident in Rome, advised a partial condemnation of Luther's Theses as heretical, and suggested that he be given another opportunity to recant. A command had gone from Leo, to the head of the Augustinian order, asking him to make Staupitz the bearer of a message to this effect, when Eck, whose personality will soon have a prominent place, appears upon the scene. In Rome, by invitation of the Pope, Eck made statements that entirely changed the attitude of Leo. A bull of excommunication was officially issued on the 14th of June. This formidable document opened with these words: "Rise up, O Lord, a wild boar has invaded your vineyard." It ordered the burning of

<sup>1</sup>Luther In the Light of Recent Research. Heinrich Böhmer. Translated by Carl F. Huth, Jr., p. 14.

all of Luther's books and anathematized forty-one of his Theses. He was given sixty days after its publication in certain stated places, to retract. A privilege which under canon law every heretic enjoyed. To those who think the Roman Catholic Church is free from party strife and passion, we commend a study of the part played in these days by the Dominican order in their defense of their fellow member Tetzel and their underhanded, bitter assaults upon the Augustinian order to which Luther belonged. Protestant "sects" have often clashed in an un-Christian spirit but the story of these days, in the life of Luther, disclose a far more malignant type of fratricidal strife. Unity is of the spirit. It cannot be secured by hierarchical power.

## CHAPTER X.

### HISTORICAL RELATION OF THE REFORMATION TO THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES OF THE UNITED STATES.

From their standpoint, we must admit that Leo and the Roman Curia had good reasons for being angry with Luther and anxious to get rid of him at the earliest possible moment. The year 1520 covers a wonderful twelve months in his career as the leader of the Reformation. Strong as he was; intellectually and physically in the prime and ripeness of his versatile genius, it seems almost incredible that he could have accomplished the amount of work that stands to his credit. As never before he made the printing press the means of propagating the seed truth that in its scattering, found lodgment in hearts prepared to welcome their life giving message. Three of his great pamphlets came in rapid succession from the press in both German and Latin.

The *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation* urged the need of interference by the secular government inasmuch as the Church had failed to reform itself. "The Romanists," says Luther, "have with great dexterity built themselves about with three walls, which have hitherto protected them against reform; and thereby is Christianity fearfully fallen. In the first place, when the temporal power has pressed them hard, they have affirmed and maintained that the temporal power has no jurisdiction over them—that, on the contrary, the spiritual is above the temporal. Secondly, when it was proposed to admonish them from the Holy Scriptures they said, 'It beseems no one but the pope to interpret the

Scriptures,' and thirdly, when they were threatened with a council, they invented the idea that no one but the pope can call a council. Thus they have secretly stolen our three rods that they may go unpunished, and have entrenched themselves safely behind these three walls in order to carry on all the rascality and wickedness that we now see."

He exposes in his trenchant fashion the hypocrisy of the distinction made between the "spiritual estate," composed of the pope and other ecclesiastics, and the "temporal estate," made up of princes, artisans and peasants. "A cobbler, a smith, a peasant, every man has his own calling and duty," says Luther, "just like the consecrated priests and bishops, and every one in his calling or office must help and serve the rest, so that all may work together for the common good."

The luxurious life of the Papal Court and the tax it laid upon the hard earned resources of the common people, are exposed with pitiless frankness. "What the Romanists really mean to do," says Luther, "the 'drunken Germans' are not to see until they have lost everything. \* \* \* If we rightly hang thieves and behead robbers, why do we leave the greed of Rome unpunished? for Rome is the greatest thief and robber that has ever appeared on earth, or ever will; and all in the holy names of the Church and St. Peter." Asserting the freedom and duty of the secular power to correct these evils Luther suggested plans for reducing the number of idle monks, stopping the calls for money to pay for the luxuries of a foreign court, prohibiting drinking habits, and reforming matters generally. "Let the power of the Pope be reduced within clear limits. Let there be fewer



cardinals, and let them not keep the best things to themselves. Let the national churches be more independent of Rome. Let there be fewer pilgrimages to Italy. Let there be fewer convents. Let priests marry. Let begging be stopped by making each parish take charge of its own poor. Let us inquire into the position of the Bohemians, and if Huss was in the right, let us join with him in resisting Rome." With a clarion note of defiance he closes with these words: "Enough for this time! I know right well that I have sung in a high strain. Well, I know another little song about Rome and her people! Do their ears itch? I will sing it also, and in the highest notes! Dost thou know well, my dear Rome, what I mean?"

This "other little song" was an attack upon the doctrines of Rome. The pamphlet *On the Babylonish Captivity of the Church*, denied that the supremacy of the Pope was of divine right. Luther boldly attacked the sacramental system of the Middle Ages, reducing the numbers from seven to three—Baptism, Penance, and the Lord's Supper. Declaring the Pope a usurper, and the Papacy the kingdom of Babylon, he closed his iconoclastic message with another defiant note. "He heard that Bulls and other terrible Papistical things were being prepared, by which he was to be urged to recant or be declared a heretic. Let this little book be taken as a part of his recantation, and as an earnest of what was to come."

Luther had indeed "taken the bull by the horns"! No wonder the ease loving Erasmus was disturbed and fearful over such defiant words, but we remember the scene at the Elector's palace fireside when, in reply to the Duke's question as to "What he really thought of Luther," Erasmus smiled and replied, "Luther has com-

mitted two crimes! He has hit the Pope on the crown and the monks on the belly."

Doubtless the Elector recalled his dream. The pen of Luther had reached Rome. While the friends of the Wittenberg professor shook their heads and his good friend the Duke suggested that he tone down his militant style, it is evident that then, as always, the strong, brave reformer was not only admired but welcomed as the providential man for the hour. It was an hour that called for courage of the highest type. Only drastic remedies could avail.

Another pamphlet in this year of prolific intellectual labor gives us the spiritual heart thought and life of the great Reformer. The *Freedom of the Christian* is Luther's testimony and doctrinal beliefs as they had been wrought out in the spiritual struggles and experiences of early manhood. It was a message that unfolded the depths of the riches of Divine grace and disclosed a gospel of love and hope that brought cheer and light into multitudes of hearts and homes in Germany and far beyond its boundaries.

The closing act, in this history making year, was the burning of the Pope's Bull, December 10, 1520. "Had there been a mountain at Wittenberg," says Seeböhm, "Luther would have lit the bonfire on the top, and let the world, far and near, see the Pope's Bull blaze in its flames. But there was not even a hill in that flat country." Heading the procession with his fellow professors, and followed by the students of the university and a crowd of citizens Luther marched through the Elster gate and on the banks of the Elbe, cast the papal decree of excommunication into flames that were also fed with

as many Roman law books as he could secure. The cheers that rose from the excited crowd were taken up all over Europe as tidings came of Luther's defiant act. The Reformation had found its foremost leader. From this time forth Luther stands in the light that for four centuries has kept his work and personality in the eyes of men of every land where the Bible has given the radiance of its message. It is a very human life that stands in this limelight. There is no need to paint him other than he was. Impetuous in temperament; moved often by strong passions and by no means free from habits that marked the social usages of his age, Luther as he stands in the light of the flames that consumed the edict of Rome is a man whose nobility of character, loyalty to Christ, and imperial qualities of genius, grows upon us as we come closer to him and follow him in the hard and rugged path that he trode until release came from earthly labors.

No man was ever called to face more bitter and subtle enmity. But the arrows of poisoned malignity fell harmless at the feet of the great leader who recognized his human frailties as no one else could do but, through the pathway of constant prayer and obedient trustful faith in God and His atoning grace, won the victory over self, the world and all the powers of darkness.

## CHAPTER XI.

### LUTHER AT THE DIET OF WORMS.

Charles V. opened his first German diet at Worms on the 22d of January, 1521. Among English State papers a copy has been preserved of "Agenda" entitled, "A memory of divers matters to be provided in the present Diet of Worms." Under caption four the diet was asked "to take notice of the books and descriptions made by Friar Martin Luther against the Court of Rome." The battle royal was on. The great question of the hour was, How to get rid of this troublesome monk? But for the protection of the Elector of Saxony matters would have gone hard with Luther. The Pope's envoy, Alexander, was under instruction to secure his condemnation as an outlaw. The emperor was ready to act within his own hereditary dominions but he wisely hesitated to extend this decree within the boundaries of the German Empire. As the outcome of the prolonged discussion the emperor agreed to summon Luther to Worms under a safe conduct.

It was an hour in which the Reformer's courage did not falter. He was prepared for the worst. "My dear brother," he said to Melancthon as he bade him good-bye, "if I do not come back, if my enemies put me to death, you will go on teaching and standing fast in the truth; if you live, my death will matter little." It was a tearful company from which he parted as he stepped into the wagon that carried him on his twelve days' journey to Worms; days that were crowded with incidents that dis-

closed the popular sympathy and strengthened Luther in his time of trial. The story is told of his interview with a priest who kept in his study a portrait of Savonarola. Taking the picture from the wall, he held it for a moment in silence before his guest. "Stand firm," he at length said, "in the truth thou hast proclaimed, and God will as firmly stand by thee." Luther rested one night at Erfurt and slept in the old convent whose walls had witnessed the mental and spiritual struggles of earlier days. The following morning, regardless of the terms of his safe conduct, he preached to a crowded congregation in the convent church.

From Frankfort he wrote Spalatin, "Christ lives, and we will enter Worms in spite of all the gates of hell and the powers of the air." At one place a parody on the Litany gave forceful expression to the excited condition of public opinion. "Have mercy," it said, "upon the Germans. From the tyranny of the Roman Pontiff deliver the Germans. From the insatiable avarice of the Romans deliver the Germans. That Martin Luther, that upright pillar of the Christian faith, may soon arrive at Worms, we beseech thee to hear us. That the zealous German Knight, Ulrich Hutten, the defender of Martin Luther, may persevere in upholding Luther, we beseech thee to hear us." It was a triumphal journey, measured by the enthusiastic greeting of the populace. Luther entered into the spirit of the people with kindly good humor and for his own relief, as well as the joy of his admirers, he joined the notes of his favorite flute with their evening songs and German good cheer. But in it all, as one of the historians of this scene has wisely said, "The point to mark is this—it did not turn the head of Luther."

News of the popular demonstrations that had attended the journey of Luther and his companions reached Worms in advance. The young emperor and his papal advisers were both angry and troubled. Messages of compromise were sent to Luther but he refused to consider them before he arrived at Worms. In answer to a possible plot of treachery, which called up the story of Huss, Luther replied: "Huss was burned but not the truth with him." In after days while recalling, with his beloved friend, the Duke of Saxony, the experiences of these times of stress, he said: "The Devil saw in my heart that even had I known that there would be as many devils at Worms as tiles upon the housetops still I should gladly have plunged in among them."

As he drew near the city towards noon of April 16th, he was met by six knights and a troop of horsemen led by the emperor's herald. A crowd gathered about him as he stepped down from the covered wagon dressed in his plain monk's gown. The rest of the day, we are told, he spent in prayer, playing at intervals upon his flute, and administering the communion to a Saxon nobleman, in an adjoining room, who was dangerously ill.

It was nearly evening of the following day when Luther appeared before the Diet. The crowd within and without the palace was so great that he was brought into the presence of the emperor and the archbishops, bishops, and nobility that surrounded the throne, by a private entrance. A pile of his books were upon the table before which he stood. Aleander, the papal Nuncio opened the examination with the questions, "Do you acknowledge these books to be yours? Do you retract the heretical doctrines they contain?" With demeanor so modest that



many thought he was ready to recant, Luther replied, "I think the books are mine." After the titles were read, he said: "Yes, the books are mine." As to the second question, he asked for time for reflection. This request was no doubt made at the suggestion of his legal counsellor. On returning to his lodgings he wrote an account of the day's doings to a friend in which he said: "With Christ's help, I shall never retract one tittle."

The next afternoon the streets were thronged with people and even the housetops were occupied by spectators eager to get a glimpse of the young Wittenberg professor. As Luther entered the hall several noblemen took occasion to whisper encouraging words as he passed them. He spoke that hour not only as a faithful servant of Christ but the representative of the German people. His address contended that in his books he had treated of faith and morals in such a spirit that even his opponents must admit they were worthy to be read by Christian people. His books against the papacy had attacked only those "who had wasted and ruined Christendom, body and soul." To retract the statements he had made would only "strengthen this tyranny." As to the books that had been written against some private individuals he expressed regret that he had sometimes "been more vehement than is consistent with the character and position of a Christian. For I do not set myself up," said Luther, "as holy. I do not, however, dispute for my own life, but the doctrine of Christ. I cannot retract even these books, but I am ready to listen to anyone who can show me where in these books I have erred." He had spoken in German, and was exhausted with the intensity of his feeling and the excitement of his surroundings. The em-



peror, who understood German imperfectly, ordered him to repeat his address in Latin. The papal party as well as the emperor, as they understood his position more clearly, could not conceal their anger. The court counsellor claimed that he was quibbling and demanded a plain answer. This stirred the indignation of the lion-hearted Reformer, and we can faintly imagine the tones of his sonorous voice as he flung back this reply: "Well, then, if your Imperial Majesty requires a plain answer, I will give one without horns or teeth! It is this: that I must be convinced either by the testimony of the Scriptures or clear arguments. For I believe things contrary to the Pope and Councils, because it is as clear as day that they have often erred and said things inconsistent with themselves. I am bound by the Scriptures which I have quoted; my conscience is submissive to the Word of God; therefore I may not, and will not, recant, because to act against conscience is unholy and unsafe. So help me God! Amen."

This hour was a turning point in the history of Christianity and the world. The Diet adjourned to meet the following morning and receive the decision of the emperor. The stubborn, relentless nature of Charles V. is discovered in all his actions at this crucial hour. He knew full well the iniquities hidden under the pride and lustful ambitions of the Papal Court. It was his purpose and desire to secure reforms in the Church, if necessary, against the Pope's will. These reforms he believed could be brought about by a council and in the face of many obstacles and discouragements he labored to this end until his purpose was accomplished twenty years later in the assembling of the famous council of Trent.

The very fact that Charles had become interested in plans looking to a purging of evil within the Church made him all the more important with monks and teachers who ventured to raise their voices in condemnation of Rome. Let this work be done by emperor, princes, and prelates in an orderly, impressive way, to be sanctioned and proclaimed by his voice as the head of the Holy Roman Empire. The emissaries of Rome had taken every opportunity to blacken the character of Luther and brand him as a "German beast," and when he came into the royal presence in the palace hall at Worms he stood before the emperor as a detested heretic. It is vain to imagine the feelings that stirred the proud, obstinate nature of Charles V. as he listened to Luther's final outburst of eloquent indignation and righteous defiance. It is a picture that has hung in the gallery of the world's thought and imagination for four centuries. Its colors are mixed with the realities of eternal truth and will never fade. In that audience room crowded with the nobility of Europe and the representatives of Rome the lesser figures have grown dim in the passing years. Two figures abide. One, raised by birth and heritage to the proudest place of imperial power in the then known world. The other, a teacher of theology in the youngest of the multitude of European universities, facing in his monk's garb, the men who were hounding him with relentless purpose to a "heretic's" death. Both of the leading actors in this scene were young men. Luther was thirty-six years old, and Charles in his twenty-first. Little could they realize the life work that was before them. The imperial power of truth was to win victories that in four centuries has crowned the monk of Wittenberg as the foremost leader of the Prot-

estant Reformation and given a place to Charles V., among the rulers of princely blood, as a foremost exponent of imperialistic and hierarchical principles that are more and more yielding to the principles of democracy; principles that lie at the foundation of the unity of the Church and of the State; principles rooted in the Testament of the Incarnate Christ and assuring the final triumph of His kingdom in the Brotherhood of humanity.

On the morning of April 19th the Diet assembled to receive the message Charles V. had written in French with his own hand, but doubtless with the efficient aid of Aleander, the astute representative of the Pope. Its keynote was the young emperor's haughty exclamation: "What my forefathers established at the Council of Constance and other councils, it is my privilege to maintain." The edict pronounced against Luther condemned him as an outlaw. The printing, selling and reading of his books was forbidden "since they are foul, harmful, suspected, and come from a notorious and stiff-necked heretic." These books had previously been branded by the papal nuncio as having "brought together all previous heresies in one stinking mass." If, sometimes, in reading the vigorous lashings of Luther's tongue and pen, we sympathize with the feelings of the wise Elector and Melanchthon in their plea that milder words be used, it is well to recall the bitter, vulgar, and utterly false statements with which Rome assailed the Wittenberg reformer and all his teachings.

The populace of Worms, and other German towns, had given full play to their bitter resentment and feeling against the Roman hierarchy. Aleander naturally resented the open insults which he and his party had en-

dured. Having won over the young emperor to their side they sought to induce him to withdraw the safe conduct that still kept Luther out of their clutches. The precedent of Huss was recalled. "Why should not Luther with Huss, be burned, and the Rhine receive the ashes of the one as it had those of the other?" Changes had come in the relative position of the princes of Rome and the nobility of nations, in their birth throes, since the Council of Constance. This new risen power sheltered Luther and left the angry ambassadors of Rome to lay further plans to trap the hated German heretic; hated the more because they recognized that he voiced the cry of a nation.

This cry was gathering strength in the very hour when the edict was read that condemned Luther as an outlaw. Ulrich von Hutten, of whom we shall hear more later on, was a leader in the crowd whose murmurings must have been wafted through the windows of the assembling place of the Diet that April morning. A few days later when word came that Luther was missing, an unknown hand posted a placard on the walls of the Town Hall, stating that 400 knights and 800 footmen were ready to avenge Luther if he were harmed by the Romanists. It bore no signature but underneath the ominous watchword of peasant revolts was thrice repeated, *Bundschuh, Bundschuh, Bundschuh*. It was indeed a handwriting on the wall. Revolutions are terrible, but the sins that compel their dynamic explosions are far more terrible. They must needs be a part of the world's history in the battle for democracy and the rights of the people against entrenched evils and the aristocratic supremacy of vested powers wrested from their rightful possessors. Luther at Worms stood fast as the servant of God. His courage

was rewarded not only by the Divine approval but in that hour he was set apart as the religious and ethical leader of a nation; nay more as the most prominent personality in a Reformation that has changed the destinies of humanity, a Mt. Blanc, in a world drama when other names appear whose influence and character was such as lift them to heights that place them among the immortals whom the generations will not willingly let die.

Charles V. was reluctantly compelled to give heed to the appeal of the Electors and granted a few more days of respite in which every effort was made to shake the opinions and convictions of Luther. For him the die was cast. On the 26th of April the emperor ordered him to leave the city. In twenty-one days his safe conduct would expire. "He left Worms the hero of the German nation. Single handed he had fought the battle of Germany against the Pope. He had hazarded his life for the sake of the Fatherland. It was this which made Luther's name a household word with the Germans for ages to come. 'There is no name in the roll of German historic heroes so German, national and typical as Luther's. He fought a battle at Worms not only for Germany but for Christendom—not only against the Pope, but against all powers, religious or secular, who seek to lay chains upon the human mind and to enthrall the free belief of the people. Against the emperor as well as the Pope, against all powers that be, he asserted the right of freedom of conscience" (*Seebohm*).

When tidings came to Worms and other German cities that Luther had been suddenly abducted by a band of horsemen, intense excitement prevailed. The placard posted on the Town Hall at Worms expressed the feeling

and purpose of the common people and many of the nobility. The wildest rumors prevailed. A report found wide credence that Luther's body had been discovered in a silver mine pierced with a dagger. That he had been slain by papal emissaries was generally believed. The true story of his disappearance was long kept a secret. Before he left Worms his influential friends among the nobility had good reason to believe that with the expiration of the few days covered by his safe conduct he would immediately fall a victim to the hate of Rome. The Elector of Saxony quietly commissioned two of his officers to seize Luther while on his homeward journey and convey him to some place of safety without letting him know where he was going. Indeed several weeks passed before the Elector knew that Luther was safe in his own castle of the Wartburg. The final edict against the arch heretic was delayed until the last of May. While the German nobility as a rule had little interest in or knowledge of the doctrinal views of Luther, they had still less interest in carrying out the mandates of Rome and the ban that outlawed the Wittenberg teacher and all his adherents, failed of any general publication.



## CHAPTER XII.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE STORM OF REVOLUTION.

The angry murmurings of the populace at Worms, and the hiding of Luther in the fastnesses of the Thuringian forests, betokened conditions that soon culminated in revolutionary action that swept with blood red flames through Germany and startled all Europe. There was a brief lull before the storm broke. Luther in the seclusion of the Wartburg castle was busy with his pen in an extended correspondence that kept him in close touch with the outside world. The manuscript of pamphlet after pamphlet was completed, and he began the great translation of the Bible into the German tongue, that was to stand through untold generations as a monument of his versatile genius and marvelous insight into the treasures of the Revealed Truth. "The crowning gift of Luther to the German people was in fact his German Bible and his German hymns. The earnest, vigorous German in which they are written fixed the future style of the language. The German spoken to-day is the German of Luther's Bible and hymns. They have been better known by the German people than any other literature, and so have done more than perhaps anything else to form the German language, and with it in no small degree the national character." (*Seebohm.*)

Luther was a lover of music and when his pen was idle his favorite flute woke the echoes of his cloister room at Wartburg and was wafted through the windows with their wonderful outlook over the forest-clad mountains



that were a source of constant refreshment. While the date of the writing of his great hymn (*Ein Feste Burg ist unser Gott*) "A sure stronghold our God is He," will probably remain in doubt, it seems most natural that its marvellous strains should have burst from the heart of Luther in these days of solitude in the fortress-like castle of the Wartburg. "It was," says Ranke, "the production of the moment in which Luther, engaged in a conflict with a world of foes, sought strength in the consciousness that he was defending a divine cause which could never perish." Heine called it "the Marseillaise of the Reformation," and Carlyle likens it to "a sound of Alpine avalanches, or the first murmur of earthquakes."

While Luther is sheltered in the Wartburg how goes affairs in the outside world? The story of political feuds, ecclesiastical intrigues, and religious and social upheavals, that marked these days, and the years near at hand, have furnished material for historians whose volumes fill libraries. The decision at Worms that condemned Luther as an outlaw, had its roots in political as well as religious conflicts. The Reformation period was preceded by a European struggle in which France and Spain contended for mastery. Italy was the battlefield and Milan and Naples were prizes to be won. The moves upon the chess board were swift and in the final result, Spain held the northern city, and gained control of Naples, while the Pope united Spain, Germany and England in an alliance that sought to drive France out of Italy. Francis I. came to the throne with a proud boast that his armies would soon make him master of Europe. The oriflamme banner of France again floated above the ramparts of Milan. Then followed the struggle for em-

pire. Charles V. won the coveted prize, and as crowned head of the Holy Roman Empire, ascended the throne of Germany. The ambitious career of Francis I. was checked. Leo X. sought an alliance with Charles in the hope of driving the French out of Italy. Henry VIII. of England, wished to strengthen the link that, through his marriage with Catherine of Arragon, Charles's aunt, brought him into close relation with Spain. He was ready to break the engagement of the Princess Mary with the Dauphin of France if he could arrange her marriage with Charles. Naturally the youthful Emperor was ready to form alliances that would strengthen his position against France. He was very unhappy over the conquest of Milan by his young rival. It was a merry game in which royal duplicity prepared the way for a seed sowing of bloody harvest fields. The Pope played a double game. Francis was preparing to cross the Alps and lead his armies into Italy. Charles V. and Henry VIII. were standing together to thwart the ambitious schemes of the French king. Watching events from his Vatican chamber, Leo decided to place himself by the side of Charles in the hope that he would help him in getting rid of the pestilent Wittenberg heretic.

These political intrigues must be kept in mind in order to understand the reasons that determined the action at Worms that outlawed Luther and his adherents. In the alliance, concluded May 8th, the Emperor and the Pope stood together against Francis as well as Luther. This outcome of long and carefully conducted political intrigues was a bitter disappointment to the German people. They knew full well that it was the action of the beloved Elector of Saxony that had turned the balance in favor of

Charles and crowned him Emperor. And now in the hour when they hoped for release from the tyranny of Rome he had linked hands with the Pope. The council of regency of which the Elector of Saxony was made the head, was powerless either to remedy existing evils or stay the tide of revolution that, like the melting of snow in spring time, was gathering innumerable rivulets whose united strength was ready to sweep, as a mighty torrent, through the forest glades and valleys of Germany.

#### THE BEGINNING OF REVOLUTION (1522).

While Luther is writing, praying, pondering, in his watch tower at the Wartburg, matters are not going well at Wittenberg. The university was crowded with students eagerly drinking in the spirit and teaching of the man whom Luther never trusted. Carlstadt now came to the place of leadership that he had long coveted. He did all he could to foster the restless iconoclastic spirit that had taken possession of the city and surrounding country. While many monks deserted the monasteries and entered various trades, Carlstadt found the way open for the radical changes in public worship, and other matters that he had long advocated.

At Zwickau in Bohemia, a weaver by the name of Claus Storch, filled with fanatical zeal, had gained a few fellow believers in what he asserted was a divinely inspired message. They posed as prophets of a faith that had no place for priests or the Bible. Their wild ravings found response in hearts ready for violence and violent deeds. Driven out of Zwickau, Storch and his companions found their way to Wittenberg. Carlstadt made them welcome and members in the city and university speedily caught

the frenzy of the wild, ignorant artisans from Bohemia; the preaching of Carlstadt, and that of a young Augustinian monk by the name of Zwilling, had already kindled a conflagration that had broken out in riots. In vain did Frederick the Wise and Melanchthon counsel moderation and a more quiet and lawful spirit of reform. Even the authorities of the city were restless of restraint. Matters came to such a pass that the altar clergy were stoned while discharging their duties, so that the mass had to be omitted. A rabble of students and townsmen seized the missal from the priest and drove him from the altar. The following day a company of students affixed a revolutionary placard on the door of the Franciscan church, and they so "intimidated the poor monks that they dared to read only one mass in the choir and lived in fear of seeing their monastery stormed during the night." This rioting was finally stopped by the city council. A more potent influence came to quell the tumult. On this very day a dark bearded and handsomely equipped horseman alighted at the home of Professor Amsdorf. He entered the house unrecognized. It was Luther. He remained in secluded consultation with Melanchthon and other friends for five days and then quietly returned to the Wartburg. He immediately wrote his treatise: "A True Warning to All Christians to Guard Against Sedition and Revolt." He sent the manuscript to Spalatin with the request that it be published at once. His friend hesitated to do so because Luther was an outlaw and it did not appear until the spring of the following year (1522), too late to help in checking the frenzied action that marked these months of violence.

The action of the burghers in arresting the leaders in the riot of December third (1521) was resented by an increasing number of the citizens. On December ninth they gathered in force and demanded not only the release of the imprisoned rioters, but the acceptance by the council of a series of articles that were by no means inflammatory. They demanded freedom in preaching God's Word; the abolishment of all compulsory and various other masses and prayers for the benefit of the dead. They requested the admission of all citizens to the Evangelical communions, the abolition of brothels and restriction in tavern drinking. The outcome of this attempt to intimidate the council was to cause the intervention of the Elector and the punishment of prominent leaders in the scenes that had brought disgrace on the Reformation movement and caused Luther profound grief and even dismay. But the excitement was not over. The professors in the university were at loggerheads and unable to "come to an agreement of doctrine." The aged Elector chided them for their lack of unity and ordered that the old system continue in force "until others also take up the matter." The hot-tempered Carlstadt paid no attention to this admonition and before the Elector was able to intervene held an Evangelical communion service free from what he termed the customary "froth." Other parish priests followed his example. All this stirred up intense feeling. It was then the Zwickau fanatics made their appearance and Carlstadt and Zwilling led the crusade that on the eleventh of January (1522) burned every picture and statue in the chapel of the Black Cloister and on the following day removed the altars. Melancthon and other professors in the university raised their voices

against this action but it is a significant testimony to the popular feeling that a majority vote within a few days approved the doings of Carlstadt and his followers by a regulation that was made a part of the city statutes. These ordinances were, for the most part, in line with reforms that Luther had suggested. In one respect, however, they directly opposed his views. It was decreed that in the eucharist the communicants shall take the bread and the cup with their own hands.

For a time the ordinance worked well. The city was freed from prostitutes and beggars. Many of the monks married and made an honest living as carpenters, shoemakers, bakers, farmers, and tradesmen. The council hesitated about removing the pictures and altars of the parish church. Carlstadt was indignant because they failed to act and his sermons stirred a mob spirit. On the sixth of February an excited crowd broke into the church and with ax and fire destroyed the beautiful pictures, crowns, and crucifixes they had once adored. The ring leaders of the mob were immediately arrested and word was sent to the Elector.

The aged Duke had been busy in moving his court to Allstedt in Thuringia and had not kept in touch with affairs in Wittenberg for some weeks. When he learned of the sacking of the Crown church that he had built and enriched with gifts, he was deeply affected. The university professors, Carlstadt, Jonas, Melanchthon, Amsdorf, and Eisermann were at once summoned to meet him at Eilenburg. Carlstadt was the main offender and the Elector's wrath subdued even his high temper. Suing for pardon he promised to refrain from preaching any more incendiary sermons.



Under the direction of the Elector, nearly all the ground that had been gained previous to the outbreaks, under the leadership of Carlstadt and Zwilling, was in danger of being lost. The Wittenberg counsellors, as they came to their senses, realized that only one man could save the situation. Without consulting with the Elector, a swift messenger was dispatched to the Wartburg, bearing an urgent request to Luther, that he return to Wittenberg immediately. Since his clandestine visit to the city in December he had known but little of what was taking place. As he read the message of the Council, with its unwelcome and unexpected tidings, his first thought was that a sharp letter of reprimand would be sufficient. As he wrote, the conviction deepened, that it was his duty to give personal attention and leadership in the matter. He at once sent a letter to the Elector telling him of his decision. A reply came back from his solicitous friend saying that in his opinion the Doctor must not "for the present by no means betake himself to Wittenberg." But Luther's mind was made up. His place from this time forward was at the front of the battle line. In a now famous letter to his beloved friend and royal protector he states the conditions that compel the decision to leave the refuge in which he had been sheltered by the kindness of the Elector. Knowing full well that Rome was ready to seize him as an outlaw he begs his aged friend not to give him further aid but to act in accord with his sense of duty even if he were ordered to "apprehend and kill him."

On the ninth of March Luther stood once more in the pulpit of the parish church upon whose doors years before he had nailed his protest against indulgences. As he



stood before the crowded congregation in the black robe of the Augustinians they might well have felt that another Elijah had reappeared to utter a message of prophetic denunciation and warning. For a week the most eloquent voice of the Sixteenth Century each day proclaimed such a message that "there was great gladness and jubilation among the learned and simple over his arrival and preaching." The spirit of unrest and disorder was quelled and the reins of leadership fell from the unwilling hands of Carlstadt. Zwilling confessed that "he had erred and gone too far." With statesmanlike ability Luther wisely conserved many of the innovations that had been made during his absence, and so guided affairs that the way was prepared in due time for further reforms.

The Bohemian prophets came to see Luther. At first he was impressed by their fanatical zeal, but warned them to take heed lest their inspiration should come from spirits of evil. At this suggestion one of the prophets with intense excitement of voice and gesticulation exclaimed, "That thou mayest know, O Luther, that I am inspired by the Spirit of God, I will tell thee what is passing in thy mind," and solemnly added: "It is that thou art ready to think that my doctrine is true." Luther detecting quickly the sham of this reply, sternly answered: "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan; the God whom I worship will soon put a stop to your spirits."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE PEASANTS' WAR, 1522-1525.

Two months before Luther returned to Wittenberg Leo X. had been succeeded by Adrian VI. A man of devout spirit he mourned over that "corruption which had spread from the head to the members." He had no sympathy with Luther or his followers, but looked upon their heresies as a judgment of God on the sins of the monks and ecclesiastical leaders. The Diet which was held in Nuremberg (1522-1525) refused to enforce the edict of Worms and urged the calling of a Council to consider the whole situation. While expressing approval of the list of abuses submitted at the Diet of Worms, they ordered that the books of Luther should no longer be printed and his voice hushed. Repudiating Luther's leadership they still declined to take active measures to suppress the doctrines that had taken such deep root. Worn out with anxiety and the effort he had made to stay the progress of heresy and secure reforms within the Church, Adrian died and was succeeded by Clement VII., a man of the type of Leo.

Clement at once dispatched Campeggio, an able Italian diplomat, to represent his demands at the Diet held at Speyer in 1526. The ambassador of Rome quickly discovered when he entered Germany that he was in a hostile country. Street crowds jeered him, and shouted the name of the Pope as Antichrist, and the churches were crowded with communicants who partook of the Sacrament of the Supper in both kinds. It was a difficult situ-

ation but the wily diplomat noted indications of the weakening of the Lutheran movement in certain directions. The war that crushed the revolution led by Franz von Sickingen had placed an undue burden of taxation upon the cities and their wealthy capitalists. Fretting under this grievance they had entered into a secret alliance with the Emperor to overthrow the central government. Campeggio took such advantage as he could of the quarrels growing out of these and other disturbances in the conduct of civil affairs. He gained the support of Ferdinand, duke of Austria, the two dukes of Bavaria, the archbishops of Salzburg and Trent, and the bishops of several influential dioceses. They promised to unite in efforts to eradicate the Lutheran heresy on condition that needed reforms should be inaugurated. The scandalous system of clerical tithes was to be abolished; the abuse of indulgences stopped; and the number of holidays reduced. The states in the Catholic League were to retain for their own uses one-fifth of the ecclesiastical revenue; only authorized preachers were to be tolerated and their teachings must be in accord with the early Fathers of the Church. The future history of the Reformation was deeply affected by this agreement. Austria, Bavaria, and the great ecclesiastical states of South Germany arrayed themselves on the side of the Pope and have ever remained faithful to Rome. Historians have noted that Campeggio in his diplomatic yielding to the demands of the German princes and ecclesiastics started effective reforms within the old Church. A German Bible with other literature was published in the interest of a movement that became widespread and helpful in restraining corrupt influences and practices. North Germany re-

mained steadfast in her loyalty to Lutheran doctrine and ecclesiastical reforms.

### THE PEASANTS' WAR.

The return of Luther from the Wartburg brought quiet and peace to Wittenberg. The Zwickau prophets left the city to proclaim their fanatical message elsewhere. Thomas Munzer came to leadership as the eloquent spokesman of the oppressed peasantry. Unlike Storch, the artisan prophet, he was a man of university and clerical training. Restless in disposition he preached for a time in Zwickau, where he made the acquaintance of the artisan group of "prophets" whose fierce attacks on the monks and the Church stirred the city. Driven from Zwickau, he journeyed to Prague, where he gained a large following. Compelled at length to leave the city he found refuge in Allstedt, where he was appointed preacher at the Church of St. John, and secured many changes in the order of services. His violent spirit met the stern rebuke of Luther and Munzer became the bitter enemy of the Wittenberg reformer. In his erratic career and propagandist labors in Allstedt, Muhlhausen, and South Germany he was the chief instigator of the socialistic revolution that broke out in what is known as the "Peasants' War."

In its origin this conflict was "a revolt against feudal oppression, it became, under the leadership of Munzer, a war against all constituted authorities, and an attempt to establish by force his ideal Christian commonwealth, with absolute equality and community of goods." We must not altogether condemn Munzer and the movement with which his name is identified without looking into the

conditions that brought about the revolt that dismayed Luther and received a condemnation at his hand that in its justice may well be questioned in days when most of the principles for which Munzer contended are foundation stones upon which rest the fabric of our democratic and republican institutions. Revolutions can only be understood as we trace them back to their sources. The peasantry that gathered with their joyous shouts about the wagon that conveyed Luther to the Diet at Worms, and the knights who escorted him in proud array, were alike bitter in their feeling toward Rome and the imperial power that they believed was seeking to crush out every right of personal liberty they possessed.

Not far from Worms was the castle of Ebernberg, the home of Franz von Sickingen, a leader among the knights of Germany. Although, after the manner of the times, he had bargained on terms of hire to fight with his soldiers at the command of the Emperor he was a valiant supporter of Luther. One of his close friends was Ulrich von Hutten, a knight of the pen. Keen of wit, and a scholar of ripe proficiency, Hutten became the virile enemy of Rome and papal abuses. His German songs woke the echoes of forest glades and palace firesides. The burden of their cry was "Germany must abandon Rome. Liberty forever. The die is cast." At the Diet of Worms these knights of the lance and of the pen were foremost figures in the crowd that followed Luther with their plaudits.

When the edict went forth that outlawed the monk of Wittenberg they numbered themselves among those who were marked for destruction by the allied power of the Emperor and the Pope. The council of regency of which

Frederic of Saxony was the head, proved a weak and powerless instrumentality. Franz von Sickingen and many of his brother knights looked upon it as a means through which the princes hoped to lessen the influence of their order. Sickingen led his forces in a private war (1522-23) against the archbishop of Treves. The battle-cry of these fifteen hundred knights and five thousand foot soldiers was, "Freedom from the Pope and priests and the punishment of the archbishop for sins committed against God and the Emperor." Fighting against an army gathered by neighboring princes, and much larger than his own, he retired within the fortress of his castle at Landshut. For months he held the castle until a breach was made in its walls. Wounded and dying the brave knight gave this message to his conquerors: "I am going to render an account to a greater than the Emperor." His friend Hutten died the same year. As the peasant soldiers who had fought under their banner scattered to their homes they remembered the songs of Hutten, and saw the lance of Sickingen flashing in the light of memorable hours of siege and conflict. Carlstadt and Munzer were journeying from city to city with their fiery message and Joss Fritz was secretly working in Swabia. The years of feudal slavery had laid unendurable burdens upon the toilers in field, and forest, and shop. The voice of Luther and the ring of his hammer on the Palace church doors at Wittenberg had wakened hope in the hearts of these drawers of water and hewers of wood who had learned in the school of bitter experience to hate Rome and the dissolute priests and monks whose exactions crushed them to the earth. When Rome exulted in the alliance that had linked the youthful emperor in plans



that made Luther an outlaw and removed him from active leadership, these men of lowly birth but vigorous strength were ripe for the seed sowing of brave knights and the wild prophets of Zwickau.

A slight incident started the insurrection. The peasants on the estate of Count von Lüpfen in Swabia were enjoying a holiday when orders came from the castle that they must at once give up their day of anticipated pleasure and gather snail-shells for the guests at the castle. The hate of long smoldering grievances burst into a flame that quickly spread through the valleys of Swabia. The efforts of the council of regency to stay the insurrection proved fruitless. The peasants demanded religious and civil freedom. Among these demands were the privilege of choosing their pastors; exemption from the payment of certain tithes; the right to hunt and gather fire wood in the forests; payment of wages for special services; the readjustment of rents; the common use of common land; the doing away of "death gifts" by which the choicest chattel of a deceased tenant became the property of the land owners. Surely these were reasonable demands but their granting would have made the peasants free men and this the proud feudal lords would not permit. The revolution spread far beyond the bounds of Swabia. The wretched peasants were no match for the trained soldiers of their over lords. Thousands were slain but the work of death did not stop. In the valley of the Neckar and Maine the peasants destroyed scores of castles and monasteries. The artisans in the towns where Carlstadt and others had preached joined in the revolt. Sweeping changes were made in civil and ecclesiastical affairs. Munzer became the recognized head of the revolutionary



forces. The fiery words of his proclamation aroused the miners of Mansfield and swept through the region where the name and work of Luther was best known. "Arise! fight the battle of the Lord! On! on! on! Now is the time: the wicked tremble when they hear of you. Be pitiless! Heed not the groans of the impious! Rouse up the towns and villages; above all rouse up the miners of the mountains! On! on! on! while the fire is burning; on while the hot sword is yet reeking with the slaughter! Give the fire no time to go out, the sword no time to cool! kill all the proud ones; while one of them lives you will not be free from the fear of man! While they reign over you it is no use to talk of God! \* \* \* Amen."

Such was the proclamation "Given at Mühlhausen, 1525," and signed "Thomas Münzer, servant of God against the wicked." At the final conflict five thousand peasants, artisans and miners lay dead upon the battlefield near Frankhausen. Münzer fled but was soon seized, imprisoned, and finally beheaded. It is estimated that at least one hundred thousand perished in this revolution that still left the wretched peasantry the victims of feudal slavery. In these days of tumult and blood Luther sided with the nobility. He did all that he could to encourage the princes to crush the rebellion. But was he altogether right in his bitter denunciation of Carlstadt and Münzer? Was his harsh treatment of the peasantry, who looked to him for help, altogether excusable? "It cannot be denied that to some extent this revolution had grown from the dragon's teeth that Luther himself had sown. There was a time when he himself had used wild language and done wild deeds. Erasmus had predicted that all Europe

would be turned upside down in a universal revolution; and had it not come to pass? The monks blamed Erasmus and the new learning; Erasmus blamed the wildness of Luther; Luther blamed the wilder prophets. Who was to blame? History will not lay blame on Erasmus or Luther, or on the wilder prophets, or on the misguided peasantry, but on the higher powers whose place it was to have averted revolution by timely reforms. It was their refusal of reform which was the real cause of revolution. It was the conspiracy of the higher powers at the Diet of Worms to sacrifice the common weal to their own ambitious objects on which history will lay the blame of the Peasants' War."<sup>1</sup>

The fact that Luther denounced Carlstadt and Münzer in such unmeasured terms ought not to prejudice us in the study of a revolution that he did so much to bring about even if without intent on his part. The reforms for which these men pled are now conceded principles of a free democracy in Church and State. Regret as we may the excesses that attend all insurrectionary movements, the door opens wider as the years go by that admits Carlstadt and Münzer to a place in history by the side of the brave spirits who again and again have led "forlorn hopes" in conflicts whose sacrificial defeats have opened the way for final victories. The position taken by Luther no doubt aided in the suppression of this disastrous insurrection, but those who sympathize with the oppressed and love freedom can but regret the words he uttered and the part he played in these trying days. His spirit was strangely unlike that of the noble Elector

<sup>1</sup>Seebohm. *Era of the Protestant Revolution*, p. 153.

Frederic of Saxony. The revolution was culminating in its force when he lay dying in his palace home. In a letter to his brother Duke John, who was with the army, he counseled him to deal leniently with the misguided peasantry. "Dear children," was his last message, "if I have offended any of you, forgive me, for the love of God; we princes do many things to the poor people that we ought not to do."

The Peasants' War, without doubt retarded the Reformation movement in Germany. Luther and his adherents lost to a considerable extent their hold on the people. The conduct of affairs was again in the hands of the princes and the Reformation as a national movement was checked. But Luther was wise and had a statesman's outlook of a perilous situation. The Reformation in Germany was saved by his action in cutting it loose from the revolutionary forces it had encouraged.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### DIET AT SPEYER. ORIGIN OF THE TERM "PROTESTANT," 1526-1555.

The princes favoring the Roman Church flushed with victories that had suppressed the revolt of their feudal subjects, gave orders that brought sorrow and death into multitudes of humble homes. In South Germany religious persecution was rampant. Lutheran laymen and ministers were condemned, not on the ground of having participated in the social revolution, but because of their adherence to heretical doctrines and teachers. Forty Lutheran pastors were hung by the roadside in one small district.

The Roman Catholic princes and the Protestant princes drew closer together in mutually protective alliances. In this attitude they faced each other in the Diet held in 1526. The brother of Charles V., Ferdinand of Austria, presided over its sessions. The time seemed opportune to the Roman Catholic partisans to crush the hated Lutherans. The Emperor had taken the French king captive at the battle of Pavia, and in the terms that set him free, he was bound to aid Charles in his war against all heretics. But heresy would not down. The discussions in the council chamber at Speyer gave brave and eloquent expression to the German hostility to Rome. The evils and corrupt doings of the Curia were reopened. The Peasants' War was shown to be a social revolution that had been primarily instigated by the exactions laid upon the peasantry by clerical landholders, and not from the teaching of Luther.

Ferdinand, acting on instructions from the Emperor, demanded the enforcement of the Edict of Worms and a decree that would stop all innovations in worship and doctrine. If these demands were granted he promised, in behalf of his brother, that his influence would be used to secure the calling of a General Council to consider and settle the doctrinal and ritual questions that had been the source of so much trouble. Protestant sentiment was represented by a majority of those attending the Diet. The Lutheran princes were by no means ready to accede to the demands laid down by Ferdinand. It was quite impossible, they said, to enforce the Edict of Worms. A compromise was suggested that granted almost all the changes favored by Luther and his adherents. A resolution was finally adopted that "the word of God should be preached without disturbance," an indemnity provided for past offenses and until the meeting of the proposed General Council, "each State should so live as it hoped to answer for its conduct to God and to the Emperor." Very reluctantly the Roman Catholic party acquiesced in this decision. No doubt the fact that Charles at this time was in open conflict with the Pope made him anxious to avoid trouble in Germany. As matters stood he could use the Lutherans as a club in his fight with Rome. Naturally the Protestant states and cities felt that the decision of the Diet gave them the right to organize territorial Churches and make such changes in public worship as they deemed best. It was an hour of hope for the Reformation. Within three years nearly all of North Germany accepted the Lutheran faith.

Soon after the Diet adjourned one of the most prominent of the Protestant princes, Philip of Hesse, com-

mitted a most unfortunate political blunder. Philip became obsessed with the belief that the Romanist princes were laying plans to attack the Lutherans and partition their territory. An under official, who proved to be a worthless knave, gained the ear of Philip and told him he had knowledge of a treaty that sustained all of his suspicions. This document was secured at a cost of 4,000 gulden. Philip hastened to place the copy of the treaty in the hands of Luther and the Elector of Saxony. They believed that it was a genuine statement but refused to aid in a plan to secure assistance outside of Germany. Philip persisted in his efforts until, to his consternation and that of his friends, the document for which he had paid so generously, was proved to be a forgery. The unhappy incident divided the Lutherans and proved a weapon in the hands of their enemies.

In the Diet at Speyer in 1529 the Roman Catholic party was in control. The representatives of the Emperor declared the clause in the ordinance of 1526, null and void, that the Lutherans had made the basis of action in organizing territorial Churches. The Diet declared that Lutheran polity and doctrine would not be tolerated in Romanist districts, and in those states that had departed from the Edict of Worms; that no one was to be prevented from attending mass, and that those sects that denied the sacrament of the true body and blood of Christ should have like treatment with Anabaptists. In addition the Diet declared that no ecclesiastical body should be deprived of its revenues and authority. This act in its enforcement sought to make it impossible to organize Lutheran Churches, for it restored the right of

Roman Catholic bishops to deal with all ministers within their diocese.

#### ORIGIN OF THE TERM "PROTESTANT."

The decision that so completely reversed the action taken three years before, led to the famous "Protest" from which is dated the use of the name "Protestant." Refusing any concessions to the Lutheran party they brought forward the protest that was read at the session of the Diet, April 19, 1529. In order to meet the obstructions placed in the way of its publication, a legal instrument was drafted in which the "Protest" was embodied with other documents. The Protestants declared that they should abide by the declarations made in 1526. When forced to make their choice between obedience to God and the Emperor they could not hesitate as to their action. From the decisions of the Diet they appealed to the Emperor and the next General Council of Christendom, or an ecclesiastical congress of the German nation. This document was signed by the Elector of Saxony, Margrave George of Brandenburg, Dukes Ernest and Francis of Brunswick-Lüneburg, Landgrave Philip of Hesse, and Prince Wolfgang of Anhalt. Fourteen cities, some of them Zwinglian in their affiliation, united in this solemn "Protest" against the action of the Roman Catholic party. They contended for an ancient principle that permitted a minority of German States when oppressed by a majority to seek relief in the laws of the Empire. Those who signed this appeal were called *Protestants*, and this name was generally given to all who rejected the supremacy of the pope; discarded the Roman conception of the position of the clergy and the doctrine of the mass;



and rejected sundry practices of the Church "without, however, repudiating the Catholic creeds."

The reform party in South Germany came under the influence of the movement in Switzerland, led by Ulrich Zwingli, who claimed that he had preached the doctrines of the Reformation as early as 1516, "before any one in my locality had so much as heard the name of Luther." In 1519 Zwingli began to denounce the scandals of the Roman Court from the pulpit of the cathedral of Zurich. In 1523 he issued a statement of his beliefs in which he maintained that the Church was not the source of authority and Christ was the only high priest. His views in regard to purgatory and other matters were in accord with those of Luther. The town council ratified his position and Zurich was no longer under the jurisdiction of the Roman Church. Within a few months drastic changes were made. Shrines were opened and relics were burned, and images were removed from churches where the mass was no longer observed. A league was formed in 1525-26—Constance and other Swiss cantons were allied with Zurich. This league in its active opposition to the house of Hapsburg represented a principle that Luther strongly opposed. He did not deem it right to combine religious and political reform. His attitude was that of a jealous defender of the rights of princes. This line of cleavage between the opinions of Luther and Zwingli was made much broader and deeper by their different interpretations of the eucharist.

Philip of Hesse was the political statesman among the German princes who supported the Reformation. He saw the need of unity among all the forces that were opposed to Rome and deplored the theological differences

that more and more threatened to separate these forces into hostile factions. He determined to bring the leaders together in a conference at his castle at Marburg. The invitation of Philip met a quick response from Zwingli. Luther had become prejudiced against the Swiss reformer and hesitated, as did Melanchthon, about meeting him at Marburg. These two great leaders were utterly unlike in temperament and training. Zwingli, from his youth up, had drank deep at the fountains opened by the New Learning. Under the guidance of an uncle who was the parish priest of Wildhaus, he studied the masterpieces of classical literature. Coming later under the teaching of Thomas Wyttenbach, he caught the spirit of reform as it was then urged both by Luther and Erasmus. A thoughtful student of the writings of the earlier Church Fathers, he gave little attention to the works of the schoolmen. The social as well as ecclesiastical environment of Zwingli was entirely different from that of Luther. From boyhood he breathed the free air of Switzerland; a land that had never felt the iron hand of Rome laid heavily upon it; a land where the cities were little republics, and asserted their right of supremacy in ecclesiastical as well as political affairs. Zwingli was not afraid to mix in political as well as religious affairs, and held that the Reformation was to be helped and advanced by political policies. All this was very obnoxious to Luther. He had long since broken with Erasmus and feared the rationalistic tendencies of humanistic culture. The views expressed by the Swiss Reformer regarding the eucharist seemed to him loose and unscriptural.

Melanchthon was in full accord with Luther in his feeling towards Zwingli. He feared that his political activi-

ties would be a source of trouble. The Protest, made at Speyer under the joint signatures of Lutheran and Swiss reformers, troubled him. He dreaded the influence it might have on the Emperor. Was it right, he asked, for subjects to defend themselves against the civil power ordained of God? "My conscience," wrote the gentle-hearted theologian, "is disquieted because of this thing; I am half dead with thinking about it." Luther learned with regret of the protest made at Speyer, and this was an added reason why he hesitated to accept the invitation to the conference at Marburg. But Philip was persistent and the Wittenberg leaders sat on one side of the table in the castle room where the "Colloquy" opened October 30, 1529.

The Marburg Colloquy, while it failed to unite the reforming parties as Philip of Hesse had hoped, disclosed that they were in essential harmony as regarded doctrine, with one exception. That difference was an entrance wedge that produced the cleavage from which we may date the separate lines upon which the Lutheran and Reformed Churches of Europe and America have developed. Both Luther and Zwingli "found in the medieval doctrine of the Sacrament of the Supper what they believed to be an overwhelming error destructive to the spiritual life. It presupposed that a priest, in virtue of mysterious powers conferred in ordination, could give or withhold from the Christian people the benefits conveyed in the Sacrament. It asserted that the priest could change the elements Bread and Wine into the very Body and Blood of Christ, and that unless this change was made there was no presence of Christ in the sacrament, and no possibility of sacramental grace for the communicant. Luther attacked the problem as a medieval Christian, con-

tent, if he was able to purge the ordinance of this one fault, to leave all else as he found it. Zwingli came as a Humanist, whose fundamental rule was to get beyond the medieval theology altogether, and attempt to discover how the earlier Church Fathers could aid him to solve the problem. This difference in mental attitude led them to approach the subject from separate sides; and the medieval way of looking at the whole subject rendered difference of approach very easy. The medieval Church had divided the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper into two distinct parts—the Mass and the Eucharist. The Mass was inseparably connected with the thought of the great Sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross, and the Eucharist with the thought of the believer's communion with the Risen Living Christ. Zwingli attacked the Romanist doctrine of the Mass, and Luther sought to give an evangelical meaning to the medieval conception of the Eucharist. Hence the two Protestant antagonists were never exactly facing each other.”<sup>1</sup>

That the participants in the Marburg Conference held a like faith is seen in the fact that all of them signed fourteen of the fifteen articles that were submitted. Alas—as it seems to us—a difference of interpretation, and not of faith, divided Protestantism at this critical hour. Philip made one more effort, but in vain, to secure the unity that he felt was so necessary. Luther might recognize Zwingli as a Christian brother holding erroneous opinions but he would not enter into a compact with him for united action. Four centuries of theological strife and division must pass before the larger part of Protestantism in the United States could clasp hands in the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

<sup>1</sup>Lindsay. History of the Reformation, Vol. I, pp. 353, 354.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE DIET OF AUGSBURG. THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION. THE SCHMALKALD LEAGUE.

Charles V., since the remarkable days when Luther stood before him at Worms, had been busy strengthening his imperial power. Now that he had made vassals, both of the French King and the Pope, he found time to again visit Germany and look after its heretics. Well aware of the progress which the Lutheran movement had made under the guidance of its founder and his princely adherents, Charles wisely sought in a conciliatory way to secure the ends that he desired.

In the early spring of 1530 the Diet was summoned to meet at Augsburg. This city was then the great trading centre between the towns of Northern Europe and the Levant, and its wealthy citizens vied with each other in making sumptuous preparations for the coming of the secular and ecclesiastical princes who were to meet the Emperor. Charles and his retinue reached the city gates on the evening of June 15th. An incident in connection with the imperial procession, that was marshalled in proud and gorgeous array, disclosed the temper of those who had charge of its arrangement. The Emperor desired the papal nuncio, Cardinal Campeggio, to ride by his side, but the Germans would not allow it. No representative of the Pope was exalted enough to stand in close proximity to the head of the German Empire. In stately array the procession moved along the streets of Augsburg and entered the cathedral whose walls echoed the *Te Deum* and the Emperor received the benediction.

As Charles retired to his rooms in the bishop's palace he invited the Elector of Saxony, George of Brandenburg, Philip of Hesse, and Francis of Lüneburg to meet him. In this private interview the Emperor discovered that he was dealing with men who had decided upon a definite course of action. They declined to accept his decision that no Lutheran preacher should take part in the sittings of the Diet. They yielded to his suggestion that he would appoint the preachers and that the Scriptures should be read without comment. An invitation to join the Emperor the following day in the Corpus Christi procession was refused. The brief, rugged speech, with which the aged George of Brandenburg met the urgent request of Charles is on record. "Before I would deny my God and His Evangel, I would rather kneel down here before your Majesty and have my head struck off." With these words he hit his neck with the side of his hand.

The sessions of the Diet opened on June 20th. The address from the throne stated that His Majesty desired "by fair and gentle means" to bring to an end the religious controversies in Germany. In accord with a request of the Emperor the Protestant leaders had prepared "a statement of their grievances and opinions relating to faith." On June 25th the historic *Augsburg Confession* was read by the Saxon Chancellor, Dr. Christian Bayer, "in such a clear resonant voice that it was heard not only by the audience within the chamber, but also by the crowd which thronged the court outside." The German princes, whose names were appended to this document, knew full well that it might prove their death warrant. The Saxon theologians begged Duke John to allow their names to stand alone. His quiet reply was, "I too,



will confess my Christ." It was not an easy decision for him to make. He was very fond of his nephew and he recognized that in signing this "Confession," they must be irrevocably separated. The story of their parting interview has been preserved. "Uncle, Uncle," said Charles to the Elector, "I did not expect this of you." The Elector's eyes filled with tears as he turned silently and left the room.

The Augsburg Confession was drafted by the hand of Melancthon. His conciliatory spirit, and theological acumen, is discovered in every line of this creed "which has obtained more currency and respect than any other Protestant symbol."<sup>1</sup> The confession sought as far as possible to minimize the differences between the Lutherans and the old Church. It repudiated the radical views of the Anabaptists and Zwingli. The celibacy of the clergy; the Mass as it was understood; auricular confession and monastic vows, were vigorously condemned. "Christian perfection," they said, "is this: to fear God sincerely, to trust assuredly that we have, for Christ's sake, a gracious and merciful God; to ask and look with confidence for help from Him in all our affairs, according to our calling, and outwardly to do good works diligently, and to attend to our vocation. In these things doth true perfection and a true worship of God consist. It doth not consist in going about begging, or in wearing a black or a grey cowl."

The confession was placed in the hands of a committee of conservative theologians. They found it a difficult task to frame a response that suited the Emperor. Five

<sup>1</sup>Professor George P. Fisher. *The Reformation*, p. 105.



different drafts were submitted before he reluctantly accepted the one that was adopted. It made reconciliation hopeless. The Lutheran princes and fourteen cities protested against the action taken and left the Diet. The final decisions compelled the enforcement of the Edict of Worms. The property of the Church was to be restored and the jurisdiction of the Imperial Court was extended to appeals involving ecclesiastical matters that affected the Protestant party. The time seemed opportune to crush the Reformation. The differences that separated Protestantism had been disclosed by the action that placed before the Diet not only the Lutheran confession but one sent by Zwingli and still another submitted by the cities of Strassburg, Constance, Lindau, and Memmingen.

Luther meanwhile was outlawed from attendance at this memorable Diet. By invitation of the Elector he was staying in his castle at Coburg and keeping in close touch with affairs at Augsburg. No step was taken without his knowledge. It was a trying time for the great reformer and we can well imagine his distress over his enforced absence from the Augsburg discussions. He feared especially that Melancthon would yield too much. Bidding his dear friend to stand firm he quotes the text, "Be ye angry and sin not." His stirring messages were bugle blasts of encouragement to the Lutheran forces that faced Rome and the Emperor at Augsburg.

In spite of Luther's well known opposition to any interference with the civil powers most of the Protestant princes realized that only the sword could save them from destruction "root and branch." In November they formed the Schmalkald League, which, following the death of Zwingli on the battlefield of Cappel, was joined

by several south German towns. The day set for reducing the Protestants by "fire and sword" (April 15, 1531,) passed without dreaded bloodshed. Charles, just then, had his hands full in looking after the Turks, who were nearing the gates of Vienna. The Pope had no reason to love the Emperor. Francis was sullenly waiting an opportunity to revenge his wrongs, and Henry VIII. was now the enemy of Charles. Matters had taken a turn favorable to the Reformation. The banished duke of Würtemberg was restored to his hereditary possessions through the influence of the "League," and joined the Protestant forces, as did the new Elector of Brandenburg and Henry, who, in 1539 succeeded his brother George of Saxony. The spread of Lutheran doctrine into Denmark, Sweden, and Norway will have mention further on.<sup>1</sup>

Charles V., finding it impossible to check the Reformation movement by force of arms, again sought by conferences between Roman Catholic and Lutheran theologians to secure by compromise a staying of the tide of heresy. His efforts proved futile. Charles was more successful in plans that disrupted the Schmalkald League. On political grounds Philip of Hesse and young Maurice, who had succeeded to the Saxony electorate, were won over to the Emperor's side. From the beginning of his reign he had striven to bring about the calling of a general council. In the face of persistent opposition on the part of the popes his efforts were crowned with success and the great Council of Trent met in 1545.

The Protestants declined to be represented. The

<sup>1</sup>See pages 156-158.

Council was dominated by Dominican and Jesuistical influences. The anathemas which it fulminated against the Protestants strengthened their convictions and widened the breach that forever separated them from Rome and her hierarchical, medieval forms of imperial government.

Maurice of Saxony, in becoming the political ally of the Emperor, did not sever his connection with the Lutherans. With the defeat of John Frederick at Mühlberg and the winning of Philip of Hesse to his side, the Emperor made another effort in the interests of religious unity. Three theologians, one of whom was a Lutheran, prepared the so-called "Augsburg Interim." While affirming the seven sacraments, transubstantiation, the headship of the Pope and the invocation of saints, they accepted, in a conditional form, Luther's doctrine of justification by faith, modified the practice of the Mass and made possible the marriage of priests. Charles for four years put forth every effort to compel the Protestants to observe the Interim. A feeling of intense hatred of Charles and his use of the Spanish army in enforcing his decrees, took possession of the German people. Maurice of Saxony almost succeeded in capturing him in 1552. At a conference of the German princes at Passau, Maurice held the place of leadership. At the meeting of the Diet at Augsburg in 1555, the peace was concluded that legalized the Lutheran faith. Only those who accepted the Augsburg Confession were included in its terms. Zwinglians, Calvinists, and Anabaptists were not tolerated. A secular ruler was permitted to choose between the old faith and the Lutheran. His decision was binding on all his subjects in case they chose another religion they were compelled to leave the country. Later on it

was decided that ecclesiastical leaders would forfeit their possessions if they deserted the old faith. The power of the princes became supreme in religious as well as secular matters. They alone were permitted freedom of conscience and the shackles of the ancient system still fettered their adherents.

The story of the progress of the Reformation outside the boundaries of the German Empire is one of intense interest and finds its narrative in the second part of this history.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE CLOSING YEARS OF THE LIFE OF LUTHER.

From the time of the formation of the Schmalkald League Luther gradually retired from active leadership of the movement that had now become so largely involved in political affairs. His work from this time on was connected with reforms in public worship and shaping the polity of the Evangelical Church. His influence was used in a conservative spirit. "He disclaimed the right of suggesting a common order of worship or a uniform ecclesiastical polity; and Lutheran ritual and polity, while presenting common features, did not follow one common use. It may be said generally that while Luther insisted on a service in the vernacular, including singing of German hymns, he considered it best to retain most of the ceremonies, the vestments and the uses of lights on the altar, which had existed in the unreformed Church, while he was careful to explain that their retention might be dispensed with if thought necessary.

"To the popular mind the great distinction between the Lutheran and the medieval Church service, besides the use of the vernacular and the supreme place assigned to preaching, was that the people partook of the cup in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and the Lutheran service became popularly distinguished from the Reformed because it retained, while the Reformed did away with, most of the medieval ceremonies and vestments. The variations in the details of the polity of the Lutheran churches were very numerous, but they all preserved the

same distinctive principles. Two conceptions lay at the basis—the thought of the spiritual priesthood of all believers and the belief that the State was a divine ordinance, that the magistracy might represent the whole body of believers and that discipline and administration might be exercised through courts constituted somewhat like the consistoral courts of the medieval bishops, their members being appointed by the magistracy.”<sup>1</sup>

Under a grievous burden of ill health Luther toiled on with indefatigable zeal. He was the confidential adviser of the evangelical princes. These friendships in one case left a blot on his record. Philip of Hesse wished to take a second wife while his first was living. Luther yielded to his friend’s urgent request and with Melanchthon and Martin Bucer put his name to a document that sought to excuse this bigamous marriage.

As the years went by Luther accepted with a more tolerant spirit the differences on the sacramental question that separated his adherents from the South German cities but he never changed in his views regarding what he considered to be the position taken by the Zwinglians. A conference held at Wittenberg (May-June, 1536,) resulted in a discussion of far-reaching importance. After long debate the differences “narrowed to one point—the presence of the body of Christ, *extended in space* in the Sacrament of the Supper.” It was agreed to leave this an open question and the compromise united North and South Germany. It is pleasant to recall that in these days Luther often expressed his admiration of Calvin’s

<sup>1</sup>Dr. T. M. Lindsay. Article *Martin Luther*, Encyclopedia Britannica. Eleventh edition.

writings in their treatment of the subject of the sacrament. Melanchthon was also a friend and admirer of Calvin and some theologians and historians have expressed the belief that if the action of the Swiss churches in accepting the views of Calvin had been taken before the death of Luther, they might have been brought through his influence into the fellowship of the *Wittenberg Concord*.

There came a message to Luther, one day, in which he was earnestly requested to act as a mediator in a dispute about inheritance that threatened division among the heirs of the house of Mansfield. Against the entreaties of his wife and other Wittenberg friends, who knew how frail was his pain-racked body, he decided to render the desired service. It was midwinter and Luther suffered severely during his tedious journey from the bitter cold. He reached his destination and was successful in his errand. He preached at Eisleben (February 14th) with all his old time vigor and eloquence. Suddenly pausing, he said: "This and much more is to be said about the Gospel; but I am too weak and will close here." It was his last pulpit message. He was very ill on the 17th, and died in the early morning of February 18, 1546. The Eisleben pastors, Jonas and Cölius, were with him at the end. "Reverend father," said one of them, "do you die in the faith of your Lord Jesus Christ and in the doctrine which you preached in His name?" With voice clear and distinct he answered "Yes." So fell asleep the great Reformer in his sixty-third year. A cortege composed of light armed troops commanded by the young counts of Mansfield accompanied the funeral car on the long journey to Wittenberg. Luther was laid to rest in the Castle



church, upon whose door he nailed the words that opened a new era in the history of Christianity.

One of the great Roman Catholic scholars of the last century has said: "It was Luther's overpowering greatness of mind and marvelous many-sidedness which made him to be the man of his time and of his people; and it is correct to say that there has never been a German who has so intuitively understood his people, and in turn has been by the nation so perfectly comprehended, I might say, absorbed by it, as this Augustinian monk of Wittenberg. Heart and mind of the Germans were in his hand like the lyre in the hand of the musician. Moreover, he has given to his people more than any other man in Christian ages has ever given to a people; language, manual for popular instruction, Bible hymns of worship; and everything which his opponents in their turn had to offer or to place in comparison with these showed itself tame by the side of his sweeping eloquence. They stammered; he spoke with the tongue of an orator; it is he only who has stamped the imperishable seal of his own soul, alike upon the German language and upon the German mind: and even those Germans who abhorred him as the powerful heretic and seducer of the nation, cannot escape; they must discourse with his words, they must think with his thoughts."<sup>1</sup>

The more personal, intimate side of Luther's life is full of interest. His marriage with Catherine von Bora was a very happy one. She proved a worthy and affectionate helpmeet. As mother and wife she assiduously cared for the husband who from the time of his marriage in middle

<sup>1</sup>Dollinger.

life, suffered constantly from physical disabilities that his overwhelming labors in early years had brought upon him. Besides his five children, eleven of his orphaned nephews and nieces found shelter in his home; a home filled with the laughter of childhood, and echoing often the notes of his favorite flute. Luther was a great admirer of nature in all its forms. The song of birds, the beauty and fragrance of the flowers, were to him a source of perennial joy and pleasure. His warm and vivid imagination found in sky and field and garden a wealth of illustrations that enriched his pulpit utterances and his every-day conversation. Admiring friends preserved enough of his familiar "table talk" to give us snatches of his rugged humor, sharp invective, and dogmatic obstinacy of opinion, that disclose a marvelous range of intellectual power and genius. In the company of the eminent teachers, theologians, and princes of the realm who gathered about his hospitable board, Luther delighted to hold fellowship in discussions of matters both weighty and light. In conversation, as in his writings, his language was often rugged to the point of rudeness and his words were by no means always free from passion and vulgar allusions. A study of the literature of the Sixteenth Century proves the extent to which language was then used as an instrument of coarse and vituperate assault. The pen of Luther was sharp as a two edged sword; in the excitement of the great conflict in which he was the leader he smote his enemies without mercy. As we look out upon the battlefield and note the character of the forces Luther confronted, is there a sword stroke of his sturdy arm that we would stay? We must remember "that from the end of 1517 to his death the

Reformer stood in the midst of one of the most bitter, spiteful and personal conflicts known to the history of the world, a controversy in which the honor of his wife, his children, his parents, his friends and his ruler were as little spared as his own person.”<sup>1</sup>

A volume could be filled with the panegyrics that have been written by historians on the character and work of Luther. “He was,” says Professor Lindsay, “the one great man of his generation, standing head and shoulders above everyone else. This does not mean that he absorbed in his individual personality everything that the age produced for the furtherance of humanity. Many impulses for good existed in the Sixteenth Century which Luther never recognized; for an age is always richer than any one man belonging to it. He stood outside the great artistic movement. He might have learned much from Erasmus on the one hand, and from the leaders of the Peasants’ War on the other, which remained hidden to him. He is the greatest in the one sphere of religion only—in the greatest of all spheres. His conduct towards Zwingli and the strong language he used in speaking of opponents make our generation discover a strain of intolerance we would fain not see in so great a man; but his contemporaries did not and could not pass the same judgment upon him. In such a divided Germany none but a man of the widest tolerance could have held together the Protestant forces as Luther did; and we can see what he was when we remember the sad effects of the petty orthodoxies of the Amsdorfs and the Osianders who came after him.

<sup>1</sup>Heinrich Böhmer.

"It is the fate of most authors of revolutions to be devoured by the movement which they have called into being. Luther occasioned the greatest revolution which Western Europe has ever seen, and he ruled it till his death. History shows no kinglier man than this Thuringian miner's son."

Melanchthon preached the funeral sermon of Luther from the pulpit of the Castle church, from which the most eloquent voice of his age had so often proclaimed messages that had stirred all Europe. In tears and with broken utterances he paid his tribute to the great leader of the Reformation whom he had loved so devotedly and aided with such faithfulness. From this time on until his death (April 19, 1560,) the mantle of Luther fell upon Melanchthon in the work that found its guidance from Wittenberg. The battle of Mühlberg, fought the year after Luther's death (1547), was a terrible blow to the Reformation in Germany. In the attempt to find some common ground to reconcile evangelical and papal doctrines the Augsburg "Interim" was promulgated. Melanchthon, while he considered the "Interim" inadmissible, thought that in matters of indifference it might be received. This attitude involved Melanchthon in controversies that saddened the later years of his life. The battle storms raged throughout Europe that finally ended in the defeat of the hopes and plans of Charles V.

The Diet of Augsburg arranged in 1555 the historic "Religious Peace." The ecclesiastical and political reservations won at this time gave a legal recognition to Protestantism but limited the possibility of its universal sway throughout Germany.

Melanchthon's gentle spirit was broken by the implacable enmities of men who could not appreciate his breadth of vision and wise tolerance. "For two reasons," he said as he lay upon his death-bed, "I desire to leave this life; first, that I may enjoy the sight, which I long for, of the Son of God and of the Church in heaven; next, that I may be set free from the monstrous and implacable hatreds of the theologians." He rested from earthly labor April 19, 1560, in his sixty-third year, and his body was laid by the side of Luther in the Castle church at Wittenberg.

The Reformation spread with amazing rapidity through the German Empire during the life time of Luther. As early as 1527 the majority of the people in the *Electorate of Saxony* embraced the Evangelical faith. Ducal Saxony, Leipzig, Dresden and other towns joined the movement by 1539. *Hessen*, under the leadership of Philip, received the Lutheran doctrines as early as 1526. *Bavarian Brandenburg* followed in 1528 and *Electoral Brandenburg* ten years later. *Lüneburg*, *Mecklenburg*, *Holstein* and *Pomerania* were among the first to join the movement.

In *East Friesland* and *Silesia* Lutheranism found an early welcome. The same was true of *Eastern Prussia*. As early as 1526 Lutheran preachers spread their doctrines in *Denmark*. Frederick I. was converted to the movement and in 1527 "liberty of conscience" was granted to all parties. Christian III., who succeeded his father in 1533, was an ardent reformer. He was present at the Diet at Worms and became a great admirer of Luther. The Confession of Augsburg was accepted by Denmark in 1569.

*Norway* and *Iceland* became Lutheran about 1539. Students from Wittenberg brought the doctrines taught by Luther into *Sweden* as early as 1519. Gustavus Vasa, who came to the throne in 1529, supported the Reformation. He not only staid the persecution of "heretics," but assumed ecclesiastical power and deposed bishops, suppressed monasteries and organized a national Church on the lines of the Reformed Church in Denmark. After considerable internal strife Lutheranism triumphed and the Augsburg Confession was adopted in 1593. The Reformation found adherents in *Poland*, *Bohemia* and *Moravia*. In these countries as well as in *Hungary* and *Transylvania* Protestantism did not gain a strong hold.

Days near at hand were to usher in the terrible struggle of political and religious forces known in history as the 'Thirty Years' War. This struggle, and the further development of the great Lutheran Church, does not fall within the limits of our story. "It was the lack of unity between German Protestants that was responsible for most of the trials through which Protestantism in Germany had to pass and for the misfortunes which so nearly overwhelmed it. Had the leaders of the German Reformation, during the first century of its existence, been able to come together and to stand together in a common cause neither the Pope nor the Emperor, or both together, could have done the harm they did. Both Luther, Zwingli, and later also Calvin, desired harmony between the opposing parties and sought some sort of agreement by means of which it might be secured. The fact that neither they nor their successors seemed able to find it, means not that it could not be found at all, but only that they as children of their time, did not see clearly enough to discern the



deeper unity of the Spirit beneath the outward differences of opinion. They had to fight so hard to make the Church a *holy* Church and a *Christian* Church that the *one universal* Church seemed for the time being of a secondary importance, and they fought the good fight of the faith against error and corruption of every kind so bravely and faithfully that we shall not blame them for not comprehending fully the larger and higher plans of the divine Commander-in-chief. Even to-day, after four centuries of steady struggle and study, it is not easy for the followers of the Master to realize the infinitely great importance of His prayer, not only for the few disciples gathered round Him in the upper room, but for them also that would come to believe on Him through their word, 'that they may all be one; even as Thou Father art in me and I in Thee, that they also may be in us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send me.'"<sup>1</sup>

The Reformation as it developed under the spiritual and moral leadership of Luther, Melanchthon, and other noble Christian teachers in Wittenberg and throughout Germany was, so far as they controlled it, a religious movement. But Luther, as he nailed his *Theses* on the church door in the autumn of 1517, and in 1521 stood before Charles V. at Worms, all unconsciously set in motion dynamic forces that not only shook the foundations of hierarchical supremacy but brought about civil conflicts and political changes the end of which has not yet come. It was the beginning of the victories of democracy in Church and State.

<sup>1</sup>J. H. Horstmann, D.D.





## PART II.

THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND; SCOTLAND; SWITZER-  
LAND; FRANCE; THE NETHERLANDS.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND DURING THE REIGN OF HENRY VIII.

In a dramatic manner, Luther's affixing of his theses on the church door at Wittenberg (October 31, 1517,) and his burning of the papal decrees outside the city walls (December 10, 1520,) opened the conflict that ushered in the Protestant Reformation. But in every world changing battle a long preparation antedates the hour when the first gun is fired. The Lexingtons and Sumters, of history, are culminating acts that fuse in decisive moments, discussions and protests that have gathered strength through many generations. As we have seen, this was peculiarly true of the Protestant revolution in Europe.

The magnitude of the changes wrought under the leadership of Luther, is most fully realized when we remember that before his death not only Germany but England, Scotland, the Dutch Netherlands, Scandinavia, and portions of Switzerland, had broken loose from the papal supremacy. In this secession of the Teutonic nations from Rome, great personalities appear upon the stage of a history that early divided Protestantism into Lutheran and Reformed Churches, separated widely in their doctrinal tenets and ecclesiastical government.

Before entering on our story of the development of the Reformed Churches of Europe, that were later on to lay the foundations of Protestantism in the United States, the question naturally arises, What did these Churches in their origin owe to Luther? In answer to this query it

has been wisely said: "It is vain to speculate on what might have been, or to ask whether the undoubted movements making for reformation in lands outside Germany would have come to fruition had not Luther's trumpet-call sounded over Europe. It is enough to state what did actually occur. If it cannot be said that the beginnings of the Reformation in every land came from Luther, it can scarcely be denied that he gave to his contemporaries the inspiration of courage and of assured conviction. He delivered men from the fear of priestcraft; he taught men, in a way that no other did, that redemption was not a secret science practiced by the priests within an institution called the Church; that all believers had the privilege of direct access to the very presence of God; and that the very thought of a priesthood who alone could mediate between God and man was both superfluous and irreconcilable with the truest instincts of the Christian religion. His teaching had a sounding board of dramatic environment that compelled men to listen, to attend, to be impressed, to understand, and to follow."<sup>1</sup>

It is true, however, that the Reformation had its beginnings in England, and other countries, long before the birth of Luther. He himself bore witness to the inspiration and help that he had received from Wiclif, Huss, and other early reformers. Outside of Germany and Scandinavia the Reformation developed along lines that diverged very widely from Lutheranism. English Protestantism finds its roots in the pioneer labors of Wiclif. In Scotland John Knox is the great dominating personality. From Geneva, John Calvin sent out messages of

<sup>1</sup>Lindsay. History of the Reformation, Vol. II, p. 14.

truth that have been as iron in the blood of generations of strong men who laid the foundations of Puritan faith and are the acknowledged founders of a democracy in Church and State that has already won victories that promise world leadership in the Twentieth Century of history.

The story of the rise of the Reformed Churches of Europe is one that finds its springs in differing national life and institutions. But these streams more and more unite as the centuries go by. In the nation they founded across the Atlantic the fullest expression of this unity is disclosed in the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

#### THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND.

More than one third of the pages of John Richard Green's "History of the English People," are taken up with that part of the history of England that in its story, social, religious, and political, is but a chapter in the rise and progress of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century. Nor is this an undue granting of space to a period that takes us back to the times of Chaucer and Wiclif; gives us the record of the conflict of Henry VIII. with Rome; the founding of the Church of England; the dissolution of the monasteries; the marvelous spring time of Elizabeth's reign with its voyaging into new lands; the unfolding of the language in which the genius of Shakespeare and Milton disclosed its power and, above all, the period in which Puritanism won leadership as a source of life that is still working as a leavening power.

The Reformation in England, at every step in its course, gives testimony that the protests that arose against

the corruptions and hierarchical supremacy of the Roman Church, were inextricably connected with the development of the national consciousness that, from the days of Magna Charta, had won the battles of a democracy that only believed in a king and royal privileges, held in check and subservient to the will of the people as expressed through its Parliament. It was a conflict between imperialistic ambitions and papal authority and a democracy that finally won victories, the significance and worth of which are yet to come to their full appraisal as a unifying, and saving power in State and Church.

Let us again take up the threads of English history already noted in former chapters. The early years of the reign of Henry VIII., with the high hopes cherished by the Oxford reformers, soon passed into the struggles that made this period fateful in English history. The character of Henry VIII. is one of the most complex among the sovereigns of Britain, if we may judge from the attitude and verdict of historical writers. That he was a man of selfish ambitions, imperious will, and intellectual strength, all are agreed. A superficial study of his career finds little to redeem him from the charge of direst cruelty and lustful purpose. A deeper probing does not free him from these charges but it does place many of his acts in a light where it is difficult to see how he could have decided differently than he did.

It was the pressure of national sentiment that enabled Henry, with the aid of Cardinal Wolsey to thwart the power of a Pope who was but a tool in the hands of Charles V., and place himself at the head of a national

Church controlled by the Crown and bidding defiance to Rome: a defiance that brought about the dissolution of the monasteries and poured their long accumulated wealth, not into the treasury of the Roman See, but into channels that strengthened the position of the royal house, and laid the foundations of the Church of England. In these mighty changes we see the melting, into a roaring tumultuous stream, of glaciers that had been slowly moving forward through centuries to a point when their gathered strength broke loose and destroyed ecclesiastical citadels of power that for a thousand years had been controlled by Rome.

The revolt of England against papal supremacy was brought about through political causes, the narrative of which is indeed a fateful chapter in English history. Henry VIII. came to a throne that had been placed upon a strong foundation. It represented the will of the people, and king and parliament worked together in the great change that transferred to the Crown the ecclesiastical jurisdiction that had been exercised hitherto by the Pope. In the early years of his reign Henry VIII. was a supporter of Rome and bitterly opposed to Luther. At the time of the Diet of Worms he wrote a book denouncing the German reformer. It pleased Julius II. so much that he publicly named Henry as "Defender of the Faith." The years near at hand changed this friendship into fierce enmity. This story compels reference to the marital troubles of Henry VIII., that, in their unfolding, disclose the fact that the women whose lives were so sadly involved were but pawns in the game of royal and papal efforts to secure supremacy in the affairs of Europe. Henry VII., like his son, had an overruling desire to fix



himself and his heirs firmly on the throne. In order to strengthen this purpose he arranged the alliance by which Catherine of Arragon, the daughter of Ferdinand of Spain, was married to Arthur, the Prince of Wales. The untimely death of Arthur disarranged the plans that his father so fondly cherished. The laws of the Church forbade marriage with a brother's wife. But royal wills do not easily accept restriction. By miserable subterfuges a decree was secured from Pope Julius II. that expressed doubt as to the validity of the former marriage and Catherine was betrothed to Henry VIII. He was but a boy at the time and Catherine was nine years older than himself. Upon his accession to the throne it became necessary for him to make final decision as to his marriage. At his father's suggestion, at the time of his betrothal to Catherine, he had signed a protest, locked up as a court secret, that opened the way if he desired to do so, when he came of age, to repudiate his promise. But the alliance with Spain was alluring in its promise of power in the affairs of Europe, and the marriage was consummated. We can see that Henry VIII. had a personal interest in taking up the cudgels in behalf of the Pope when Luther made his attack upon the Roman Church. He understood very well that the validity of his marriage depended upon the upholding of these claims by papal authority. Children were born of this marriage but all, with one exception, died in infancy. The Princess Mary survived. Upon her the succession depended. Another alluring alliance became the hope of her father. The marriage of the Princess to Charles V. would make the Spanish and Papal Courts the friend and ally of the English Crown. Two men played a large part in the tragic drama of these

days. One of these men, Thomas More, has already found a place in our narrative. The other is Thomas Wolsey, now cardinal and Archbishop of York, and Henry's war minister. More had become a member of the king's privy council. When Luther made his fierce reply to Henry VIII.'s book More defended it. As time went on his sympathy with the Reformation movement also cooled and he became a staunch upholder of the authority of the Papal See. Erasmus yielded to his opportunity to use his influence against Luther and during the Peasants' War More wrote letters "charging the Lutheran movement with having lit the flame of sedition and set Germany on fire." From this time onward when, from the height of power he fell, like Wolsey, a victim to the cruel hate and treachery of Henry VIII., he upheld the claims of Rome and died in her communion.

The hoped for Spanish alliance, by the marriage of Charles V. to the Princess Mary, was not consummated. The marriage of Charles to the Infanta of Portugal opened the eyes of the proud English sovereign to the fact, long suspected by Wolsey, that he had been betrayed both by Spain and Rome. In this hour, that threatened the life of the Crown, Henry VIII. made resolutions prompted by selfish ambitions, that in the end were providentially overruled in bringing about the Reformation that placed England among Protestant nations. Angered by the treachery of the Pope and Charles V. and deeming it doubtful if England in the event of his death would place Mary on a throne that a queen had never occupied, he decided with the help of Wolsey to

secure at all hazards a divorce from Catherine of Arragon. Wolsey employed his adroit powers to the utmost to secure the sanction of the Pope to this separation from the wife who had met her every duty in faithfulness, but the negotiations failed. Henry knew the existing temper and feeling of the English people against the autocratic rule of Rome. "The time had come when England was to claim for herself the fulness of power ecclesiastical as well as temporal, within her bounds; and in the concentration of all authority within the hands of the sovereign which was the political characteristic of the time, to claim this power for the nation was to claim it for the king."<sup>1</sup>

Henry consummated a secret marriage with Anne Boleyn, a union that in its tragic end, disclosed the dissolute life that was hidden behind palace doors and royal favor. To those who wish to know the facts of this tragic history we commend a reading of the testimony that ended the life of this consort of England's despotic sovereign. In this drama we remember that Anne Boleyn was the mother of Elizabeth, under whose reign Protestantism was, by the will of the people, firmly established.

Now that we can happily cease mention, for the most part, of Henry VIII. and his marital troubles, we turn again to the history of the people and some of the leaders whose support made it possible for an imperious king to break away from the control of Rome and lead in political action that founded a National Church and after his death made England a foremost power in the Protestant Reformation.

<sup>1</sup>Green. History of the English People.

The closing years in the life, both of Erasmus and More, are not altogether pleasant to dwell upon. We have already referred to the remarkable influence that followed the publication of the Greek New Testament by Erasmus. "It revealed the fact that the Vulgate, the Bible of the Church was not only a second-hand document, but in places an erroneous document. A shock was thus given to the credit of the clergy in the province of literature, equal to that which was given in the province of science by the astronomical discoveries of the Seventeenth Century."<sup>1</sup> Basil was the home of Erasmus for many years, and here he filled the position of general editor and literary adviser of the famous Frobrin Press. For a time he resided in Freiburg, but finally returned to Basel, where he continued his literary activities until his death the 12th of July 1536, in his 70th year.

Erasmus was not a reformer of the type of Luther or Knox. He was keenly alive to the evils that had become entrenched in the Roman Church. He earnestly favored the suppression of the monasteries and the overthrow of the power of the clergy, but these reforms he desired to secure from within the Church. His position brought him again and again into conflict with Luther. "In the mind of Erasmus there was no metaphysical inclination; he was a man of letters, with a general tendency to rational views on every subject which came under his pen. His was not the mind to originate, like Calvin, a new scheme of Christian thought. He is at his weakest in defending free will against Luther, and indeed he can hardly be said to enter on the metaphysical question. He

<sup>1</sup>Encyclopedia Brittanica. Article *Erasmus*. Eleventh edition.

treats the dispute entirely from the outside. Though Erasmus did not intend it, he undoubtedly shook the ecclesiastical edifice in all its parts."<sup>1</sup>

Tidings of the execution of Sir Thomas More (1535) reached Erasmus in his home at Basel, where he was then suffering greatly from illness and the infirmities of age. He was writing a book on the "Purity of the Church" in which he spoke of his friend as "a soul purer than snow." The verdict of history has dealt with More as a man of noble and generous spirit, strong intellectually and far-visioned as a statesman. The royal master, whom he so faithfully served, but to whom he would not yield in matters of conviction, could send him to the block but he could not break the temper of his noble spirit. While he was lord chancellor, by virtue of his office, he became prosecutor of heretics. Tolerance in these times, as both Geneva and Rome gave illustration, was an unknown virtue. Christian men of all parties deemed it their bounden duty to destroy, root and branch, any denial of truths they held as the foundation of their faith. If men would not renounce their heresies death was the penalty. But we are assured that More's gentleness showed itself even when he was an official prosecutor. He left no means unused to secure the abjuring of the heretics brought to trial during his chancellorship. So well did he succeed that only three were burned at the stake and these martyrs died with the prayer upon their lips, "May the Lord forgive and open the eyes of Sir Thomas More."

"Strange was it that during these sad months, while

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

More was persecuting others for consciences' sake, he himself had to choose between his own conscience and death." (*Seebohm.*) Among his last acts was the preparation of a paper in which he warned his friends, in meting out punishment to heretics, not to let their zeal outrun their charity. His heart was saddened over the conflicts that were disrupting the Church and it was his prayer in the closing days of his life that there might be a reconciliation brought about between Catholics and Protestants.

After the fall of Wolsey, Thomas Cromwell became the parliamentary agent through whom Henry pushed forward his plans. Like his master he was a man of unscrupulous ambition. He toiled unremittingly to secure the temporal sovereignty for the Crown in all matters of government. He was a Protestant because they represented the partisan supporters of the absolute monarchy he upheld with all the vigor of his immense strength. Henry and his minister were of kindred cruelty of spirit. "He used the ax with as little passion as the surgeon does the knife, and he operated on some of the best and noblest in the land." Parliament stood by the king in his strife with Rome. The historic Act of Supremacy ordered that the king "shall be taken, accepted, and reputed the only supreme head on earth of the Church of England, and shall have and enjoy annexed and united to the imperial crown of this realm as well the title and state thereof as all his honors, jurisdiction, authorities, immunities, profits and commodities to the said dignity belonging, with full power to visit, repress, redress, reform, and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, contempts, and enormities, which by any manner of spiritual authority or jurisdiction might or may lawfully be reformed." The full sig-



nificance of this Act was made clear when in the following year (1535) Henry formally assumed the title of "on earth supreme head of the Church of England." Thomas Cromwell became the King's vicegerent. Under the Act of Supremacy even the bishops of the Church of England were dependents of the Crown. "That the power of deposition was at a later time quietly abandoned was due not so much to any deference for the religious instincts of the nation as to the fact that the steady servility of the bishops rendered its exercise unnecessary."<sup>1</sup>

The Articles of Religion of the new National Church were drafted by the hand of Henry himself. The Bible and the three historic Creeds were made the sole grounds of faith. The Sacraments were reduced from seven to three. Following the action of the Lutheran churches the doctrines of Transubstantiation and Confession were maintained. A place was found for the doctrine of Justification by Faith. The doctrine of purgatory, of pardons, and of masses for the dead, were condemned, but prayers for the dead were permitted and the ceremonies of the Latin Church were retained with slight changes.

At this point the name of William Tyndale may well find mention. While a student at Oxford, and then at Cambridge, he came under the influence of Erasmus's New Testament. "If God spare my life," he replied to a learned professor, "ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plow shall know more of the Scripture than thou doest." In middle life his dream was realized. Drawn by the fame of Luther he joined the company of students that were flocking to Wittenberg. In 1525 he

<sup>1</sup>Green's *History of the English People*.



completed his version of the New Testament. Six thousand copies of its first edition were sent to England. Denounced, by reason of its Lutheran origin, as heretical it was burned with other books in the presence of Wolsey in St. Paul's churchyard. Only eleven years later, under the avowed patronage of Henry, Miles Coverdale was employed to revise the translation of Tyndale and it became the Bible of the people, bearing the approval of the Crown at the time, when by royal command, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments were rendered into English and ordered to be taught by every schoolmaster to his pupils and by every father to his children. The execution of Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More, and the martyrdom of the brethren of the Charter house, stirred intense feeling throughout every part of the realm. Even radical supporters of Henry, in his conflict with Rome and the purpose to rear the superstructure of a National Church, were dismayed at the ruthless decisions of his prime minister. The revolt in the north and west of England and the marriage of Henry to Anne of Cleves, revealed alike the strength and weakness of the counsellor who had done so much to realize the ambitions of his sovereign. But the self-seeking and cold-hearted king, hearing the mutterings of popular condemnation, sends Cromwell to his death.

Rome no longer controlled either the secular or ecclesiastical affairs of Britain. England was to be the leader, side by side with Scotland and the Netherlands, of the new democracy that was to lay the foundations of free Reformed Churches, that gave birth to the national life that now holds sway in North America. Surely this is sufficient reason for dwelling at full length upon the his-

tory of the Reformation in the countries where democracy won victories that are the heritage of the Churches that numerically and historically hold the foremost place of influence and leadership in the United States and the Dominion of Canada.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND FROM THE CLOSING YEARS OF THE REIGN OF HENRY VIII. UNTIL THE ACCESSION OF ELIZABETH.

In the torrential rush of changes that tore away century-old foundations, there were counter currents that disclosed opposing forces that strove to stay the destructive flood. But in vain. The decree of an angry Pope, excommunicating the King of England and calling upon the Emperor, all Christian Princes, and even his own subjects, to execute it by force of arms, marked the final breach with Rome. Acts of Parliament (1534) of the most drastic nature were adopted. The payment of "first fruits" to the Pope were forbidden, as well as the payment of Peter's pence. The validity of the king's marriage was affirmed and the Supremacy Act declared that the king was rightfully the *Supreme Head of the Church of England*, and that it was within his powers to make ecclesiastical visitations and redress ecclesiastical abuses. To this was added an Act that marked as treason the calling of the king a heretic or schismatic or the denial that he was the Supreme Head of the Church. Convocations held at Canterbury and York ratified this action by declaring that "the Roman Pontiff had no greater jurisdiction bestowed on him by God in the Holy Scriptures than any other foreign Bishop."

It is well to note that this change was at first almost entirely confined to the temporal control and headship of the English Church. The changes in doctrine were

slight. The ecclesiastical courts did not lose their power and place. Appeals from their decisions were no longer taken to Rome but settled by the king's courts. We have already referred to the outcome of discussions that, at an early date, under the leadership of Cranmer, Thomas Cromwell and Bishop Latimer, secured what are known as the *Ten Articles*. In their adoption we find the spirit of Wiclif and the aspirations of the Oxford Reformers coming to their realization. "These Articles," says Professor Lindsay,<sup>1</sup> "are anything 'but essentially Romish with the Pope left out in the cold.' They are rather an attempt to construct a brief creed which a pliant Lutheran and a pliant Romanist might agree upon—a singularly successful attempt, and one which does great credit to the theological attainments of the English king."

A committee composed mostly of Bishops were empowered "to compile certain rudiments of Christianity and a Catechism." This little volume, popularly known as the *Bishop's Book*, was issued in 1537. The clergy were ordered to read lessons from its pages on every Sunday. The Catechism, provided at the same date, had wide circulation. When the *Bishop's Book* was published the king found "no time convenient to overlook the great pains" that had been taken in its compilation. Later on the royal intermeddler found leisure to revise its pages and this edition, known as the *King's Book*, was published in 1543. Six years previous to this date, under the *Injunctions* of 1536, a copy of the Bible had been placed in all the churches. Thus was the power in high places

<sup>1</sup>History of the Reformation, Vol. II, p. 335.

that, in pursuit of selfish ambitions, separated England from the supremacy of Rome, overruled in ways that gave the Light that, in its transforming power in the life of English homes and hearts from this time forward, made the Reformation in Britain a source of spiritual awakening and preparation for world leadership in a democracy that found its fountain head in the teachings of Christ and the institutions that flourished in the early days of Christianity.

It was Tyndale's version, with some additions, and a preface by the Archbishop, popularly named the *Great Bible* or *Cranmer's Bible*, that was read each Sunday from every pulpit in the land. There was a time in these years when Henry, ready to break all commandments, but over anxious to ease his conscience and strengthen the succession to the Crown by securing approval of his divorce from Catherine of Arragon, turned for assistance to the leaders of German Protestantism. An influential embassy was sent to Wittenberg. They were courtiers and had a courteous reception. But the Lutheran leaders did not change their opinion of the King of England and the hypocritical part they believed he was playing in transferring the power of Rome into his own hands. The death of Queen Catherine (January 7, 1536,) relieved Henry of further desire for outside approval.

Thomas Cromwell had in charge the superintendence of the visitation of monasteries that led to their dissolution under the Act of Parliament (1536).<sup>1</sup> This change, far-reaching in its influence, was brought about by what

<sup>1</sup>A full account, based upon original documents and reports, is easily accessible in Froude's *Henry VIII.* (Everyman's Library), Vol. II, pp. 109-181.

has been truthfully called "the first great parliament of the Reformation." Unfortunately almost all of the reports of the discussions, that resulted in drastic decisions, have been lost, but we know the conditions that were dominant in the action taken at this time. The feudal system had lost its power in England. "The Lords had ceased to be the leaders of the English people; they existed as an ornament rather than a power; and under the direction of the council they followed as the stream drew them, when individually, if they had so dared, they would have chosen a far other course. The work was done by the Commons; by them the first move was made; by them and the king, the campaign was carried through to victory. And this one body of men, dim as they now seem to us, who assembled on the wreck of the administration of Wolsey, had commenced and had concluded a revolution which had reversed the foundations of the State. They found England in dependency upon a foreign power; they left it a free nation. They found it under the despotism of a Church establishment saturated with disease; and they had bound the hands of that establishment; they had laid it down under the knife, and carved away its putrid members; and stripping off its Nessus robe of splendor and power, they had awakened in it some forced remembrance of its higher calling.

"The elements of a far deeper change were seething; a change, not in the disposition of outward authority, but in the beliefs and convictions which touched the life of the soul. This was yet to come; and the work so far was but the initial step or prelude leading up to the more solemn struggle. Yet where the enemy who is to be conquered is strong, not in vital force, but in the prestige of

authority, and in the enchanted defences of superstition, those truly win the battle who strike the first blow, who deprive the ideal of its terrors by daring to defy it" (*Anthony Froude*).

The feeling had gained strength through generations that the monasteries were the source of unspeakable evils. Protected by Rome from civil responsibility their inmates were more and more looked upon as the selfish users of inherited wealth, given for noble purposes, but now employed in ways that made once venerated religious houses breeding places of superstition, indolence and corrupt practices.

There are good reasons for the belief that it was not sympathy with popular feeling that made Henry VIII. anxious to suppress the monasteries. He was quite ready to understate this work as a means of strengthening his kingly power. The great fortune that had come to him from his father had dwindled under the demands of plans that sought under the administration of Wolsey to win leadership in the affairs of Europe. The looting of the wealth of the monasteries offered an easy way of filling the royal treasury. More than this it enabled Henry to enrich the rapacious company of courtiers upon whose good will so much depended. The visitation uncovered iniquities that an indignant House of Commons would no longer endure. They were the agents of reform. The king reaped the benefits he desired. Not only was the monastic property vested in his name but quantities of jewels and precious metal. Testimony is on record that the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury furnished twenty-six cartloads of gold and silver.



In this overturn of ancient foundations the priesthood lost their influence and they abjectly sued for aid from the men whom they had persecuted. Cranmer became Archbishop of Canterbury and Hugh Latimer, the farmer's son, who had won high honors at Cambridge and had gained renown as a preacher of remarkable power and courage, was appointed Bishop of Worcester.

The pendulum of popular feeling now swung to an opposite extreme. The friends of Rome, and they were many, were embittered by the sacrilegious way in which the objects of their superstitious worship were cast into the mire. Even Henry complained that the new Scriptures were "disputed, rhymed, sung and jangled in every tavern and ale-house." Even the Mass "was held up to scorn in ballads and mystery plays." These insults of the populace caused a reaction. The Parliament, at the instigation of the king, enacted the statute well termed "the bloody whip with six strings." It was made a felony, punishable with death "to teach that it was necessary to communicate in both kinds in the Holy Supper," or that priests, monks or nuns vowed to celibacy might marry.

There were other "strings," equally severe, under the lash of which heretics suffered, even unto death, in the later years of Henry's reign. With vindictive haste the prime minister who, like Wolsey, had given his life to the task of making the Crown the source both of ecclesiastical and political authority was hurried to the block. Cranmer barely escaped the same fate. Three Lutheran clergymen and three Romanists were beheaded for denying the King's supremacy.

A manual that was essentially a revision of the Six Articles, prepared in part by Cranmer and carefully con-

sidered both by Convocation and the King, was published in the spring of 1543.<sup>1</sup> It differed from the former manual in that it distinctly taught the doctrines of *Transubstantiation*, the *Invocation of Saints*, and the Celibacy. "It may be said that it very accurately represented the theology of the majority of Englishmen in the year 1543. For king and people were not very far apart. They both clung to medieval theology; and they both detested the Papacy and wished the clergy to be kept in due subordination. There was a widespread and silent movement towards an Evangelical Reformation always making itself apparent when least expected; but probably three-fourths of the people had not felt it during the reign of Henry. It needed Mary's burnings in Smithfield and the fears of a Spanish overlord, before the leaven could leaven the whole lump."<sup>2</sup> While in a general way this summing up of conditions at the close of the reign of Henry VIII. is correct, we must not lose sight of the effect that the action of the Council of Trent (1545) had, both upon the king and the English people, Henry was not only strengthened in his resolution to withstand the reasserted supremacy of Rome, but even offered to unite in a "League Christian" with the Lutheran princes of Germany. At the suggestion of Cranmer he allowed the Mass to be changed into a Communion Service. The Duke of Norfolk, the leader of the Roman Catholic nobility, was locked within a traitor's cell in the tower, and his son, the Earl of Surrey, sent to the block.

<sup>1</sup>*A Necessary Doctrine and Erudition for any Christian Man; set forth by the King's Majesty of England.*

<sup>2</sup>Lindsay. *History of the Reformation*, Vol. II, pp. 349, 350.

The last scene in the life of the man whose imperious will and selfish ambitions freed England from papal pretensions and the supremacy of Rome, was in keeping with a career that in its strange mingling of strength, weakness and cruel actions, has received such differing verdicts from the pen of historians. As the shadows were falling over the streets of London on the evening of Jan. 28, 1547, the watchers by the bedside of Henry VIII. saw that the end was near at hand. At his request Cranmer was summoned. When the bishop reached the palace the King, though conscious, was speechless. Cranmer "speaking comfortably to him, desired him to give some token that he put his trust in God through Jesus Christ; therewith the king wrung hard the archbishop's hand, and expired."<sup>1</sup>

Edward the Sixth was but nine years old when he succeeded his father. His brief life gave but little opportunity for personal influence. So far as it was exerted he strengthened the hands of those who upheld the divine rights of kings, and he did all that lay in his power to encourage the Protestant leaders and exclude Mary and Elizabeth from succeeding him on the throne. The political leadership of these years was in the hands of the Dukes of Somerset and Northumberland. Cranmer guided the strong current that set in favor of Protestantism. He was especially active in the revisions that gave to the Church of England and the American Episcopal Church the Prayer Book, that for four centuries has led the public and private devotions of their great host of communicants. Many whose connection has been with

<sup>1</sup>*Strype's Life of Cranmer*, Vol. I, p. 199.

other communions have given heartfelt response to the words of the English historian. "As the translation of the Bible bears upon it the imprint of the mind of Tyndal, so, while the Church of England remains, the image of Cranmer will be seen reflected on the calm surface of the Liturgy. The most beautiful portions of it are translations from the Breviary; yet the same prayers translated by others would not be those which chime like church bells in the ears of the English child. The translations and the addresses which are original, have the same silvery melody of language, and breathe the same simplicity of spirit."<sup>1</sup>

Very different are the verdicts that time has past upon the characters of the two great political leaders of the reign of Edward the Sixth. Somerset was the victim of the unscrupulous and treacherous Northumberland. "It is well to remember," says Professor Lindsay, "in these days when the noble character of the Duke of Somerset has received a tardy recognition, that John Knox, no mean judge of men, never joined in the praise of Northumberland, greatly preferred his predecessor, although his advance in the path of Reformation had been slower and much more cautious."<sup>2</sup>

The repeal of the "Six Articles" and the treason laws brought back to England many of the refugees who had found a home in Germany and Switzerland. The victories won by the Emperor Charles V. led a large number of continental Protestants to seek refuge in England from the penalties of the *Interim*. Some of these men found

<sup>1</sup>Froude's. Edward the Sixth, Everyman's Library, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup>History of the Reformation, Vol. II, p. 359.

places as teachers at Oxford and Cambridge, and their influence became a leavening power. The New Learning penetrated into every class in society. Edition after edition of the Bible found ready sale. In sympathy with the tide of reformation Northumberland and the Council deprived the Romanist prelates of their sees. These places were filled by men like Coverdale and Ridley. John Knox, but recently from the French galley, where he had been held prisoner after the seizure of the garrison of St. Andrews, was offered the bishopric of Rochester but preferred his duties as one of the King's preachers.

The act of parliament that enforced the use of the Book of Common Prayer<sup>1</sup> did away with all reference to a propitiatory Mass. The word *table* is used instead of *altar*. *Minister* and *priest* were employed as equivalent terms. The communion table was removed from the east end of the church and placed within the chancel. The Ten Commandments were read for the first time. Several rubrics were omitted and changes made in the services for baptism, confirmation and ordination. Some of the ardent Reformers even desired to do away with the rubric that required communicants to receive the elements kneeling. The most important change was that made in the words addressed to the partaking communicants. In the First Prayer Book the words were: "When the priest delivereth the sacrament of the Body of Christ, he shall say to every one these words: *The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.* And the minister delivering the sacrament of the Blood and giving every one once

<sup>1</sup>The *Second Prayer Book of King Edward*.

to drink and no more, shall say: *The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life.*"

In the Second Prayer Book the rubric read as follows: "Then the minister when he delivereth the bread, shall say: *'Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart by faith and with thanksgiving.'* And the minister that delivereth the cup shall say: *'Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee and be thankful.'*"

It is interesting to note that these words are to-day repeated by tens of thousands of ministers to kneeling communicants at the celebration of the Lord's Supper in churches throughout the United States representing more than one-half of the eighteen millions and over, enrolled as members of Churches in the fellowship of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.<sup>1</sup>

The closing days of the brief reign of Edward VI. were marked by conflicting and irritating influences that, as conditions favored, kindled the lurid flames of Smithfield and gave the name of "Bloody Mary" to the daughter of Henry VIII. and Catherine of Arragon. In times when we can look dispassionately into the records of these sad years in English history, we discover that the actors in this drama were none of them free from blame. The zeal of some of the reformers, fanned into white heat by the fiery spirit of refugees who had fled from the Continent to escape the persecution of Rome, was so iconoclastic in its action that a reaction of popular feeling fol-

<sup>1</sup>This statement includes the membership of all branches of the Methodist Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church, and the Reformed Episcopal Church.



lowed. Agrarian troubles that were the source of great distress in the rural countries, combined with the fierce political struggles of which Somerset and Northumberland were the leading figures, were potent factors in bringing about a situation that lit the skies of England with the flames that consumed the "earthly tabernacles" of the martyr host who for Christ's sake, in loyalty of faith and confession, gave their bodies to be burned.

The schemes of ambitious prelates and statesmen by which they hoped to place Lady Jane Grey, the daughter of a Margaret, the eldest sister of Henry VIII., upon the throne came to nought. To their surprise the people of England rallied to the support of the daughter of Catherine of Arragon. Mary was a devout Catholic. Her one overruling purpose and desire was to turn back the tide that had swept away the old foundations and bring England back again into the Roman communion. We must not forget that great multitudes of the people and many of the nobility still clung to the old Church. They shared to a large extent in the feeling that clamored for reform of the monasteries. They were ready to strengthen the throne against the arrogant supremacy of Rome, but they still clung to the old forms of worship and symbols of faith and deplored the innovations that swept away the former landmarks.

Had Mary and her advisers been satisfied to act a mediating part in these troubled days the course of history might, at least for a time, have turned into its ancient channels. But this was not to be. Her Roman faith and training, combined with bitter resentment and memories of her father's treatment of her mother, strengthened the firm will that sent Lady Jane to her execution, and fal-



tered not in the purpose to destroy the fabric of Protestantism that had been so quickly reared. At the time of her coronation (October 1, 1553,) the first Parliament that met four days later disclosed the fluctuating state of public opinion. Mary found herself "in the anomalous position of being the supreme head of the Church in England while she herself devoutly believed in the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome. The title and the powers it gave were useful to restore by royal proclamation the medieval ritual and worship, and Mass was reintroduced in December."<sup>1</sup>

The marriage of Mary with Philip of Spain was attended by an outburst of popular indignation. "In September (1553) the pronouncedly Protestant Bishops who had returned to England to face the storm, Cranmer, Ridley, Coverdale, Latimer were ejected and imprisoned; the Protestant refugees from France and Germany and many of the eminent Protestant leaders had sought safety on the Continent; the deprived Romanist Bishops, Gardiner, Heath, Bonner, Day had been reinstated; and the venerable Bishop Tunstall, who had acted as Wolsey's ambassador at the famous Diet of Worms, had been placed in the See of Durham."<sup>2</sup> With a hand and heart that was true to her heritage, Mary quelled uprisings and sent to the block not only Lady Jane Grey but proud members of the nobility. Had the advice of Charles V. been followed the Princess Elizabeth would have met the same fate.

Passing over the efforts that were made by Mary and the King consort to secure peace with Rome we quickly

<sup>1</sup>Lindsay. History of Reformation, Vol. II, p. 370.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 731.

come to the culmination of this drama in which the spirit that invented the instruments of torture used to enforce the decrees of the Inquisition, leaped with tiger-like ferocity upon the men who had led the forces of Protestantism in the days of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. In this company of "noble martyrs" were a multitude of men and women some of whose names we do not know. "Faithful unto death," they are "written in the Lamb's Book of Life." Strype, in his catalogue of the two hundred and eighty-eight persons who were burned during the reign of Mary, adds, "besides those who dyed of famyne in sondry prisons."<sup>1</sup> We get glimpses of these dungeon cells sufficient to reveal unspeakable suffering. In many cases the stake must have been looked forward to as a welcome release.

It is difficult to understand a spirit of intolerance that could mete out such punishment to men and women who held to the great verities of Christian faith but denied the dogmas of Purgatory and the Mass, holding "that Baptism and the Lord's Supper were the Sacraments instituted by Christ." John Rogers, who had aided Tyndale in his translation of the Bible, was burned February 4, 1555. The French ambassador reported to his royal master that the crowd cheered the heretic martyr on his way to the stake "as if he were going to his wedding." It was the rumble of another swift coming change that forever was to make England and English Protestantism the leader of a new democracy that should battle for freedom of conscience and liberty of thought and turn back the faith of men to the days of Pentecost and the Acts of the Apostolic Church.

<sup>1</sup>Strype. Memorials, Ecclesiastical and Civil.

We come now to the closing scene in the life of Thomas Cranmer, the great ecclesiastical leader in the days that laid the foundations of the Church of England. Mary received her orders from Rome. The aged bishop, so intensely hated by the arrogant prelates whose power he had weakened by sturdy strokes at the very root of their existence, "was found guilty of contumacy and the command went forth that he was to be deposed, degraded, and punished as a heretic." The story of the closing days of Cranmer may well be transcribed to these pages as they find vivid narration from the pen of John Richard Green.<sup>1</sup>

"The moral cowardice which Cranmer had displayed in his miserable compliance with the lust and despotism of Henry displayed itself again in six successive recantations by which he had hoped to purchase pardon. But pardon was impossible; and Cranmer's strangely mingled nature found a power in its very weakness when he was brought into the Church of St. Mary at Oxford to repeat his recantation on the way to the stake. 'Now,' ended his address to the hushed congregation before him, "now I come to the great thing that troubleth my conscience more than any other thing that ever I said or did in my life, and that is the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth, which here I now renounce and refuse as things written by my hand contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death to save my life, if it might be. And, for as much as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, my hand therefore shall be the first punished; for if I come to the fire, it shall be the first burned.' 'This was the hand that wrote it,' he again exclaimed at the stake, 'therefore it shall suffer

<sup>1</sup>History of the English People, Vol. I, pp. 462, 463.

first punishment ;' and holding it steadily in the flames 'he never stirred or cried' till life was gone.

"It was with the unerring instinct of a popular movement, that, among a crowd of far more heroic sufferers, the Protestants fixed, in spite of his recantations, on the martyrdom of Cranmer as the death blow to Catholicism in England. For one man who felt within him the joy of Rowland Taylor at the prospect of the stake, there were thousands who felt the shuddering dread of Cranmer. The triumphant cry of Latimer could reach only hearts as bold as his own ; but the sad pathos of the primate's humiliation and repentance struck chords of sympathy and pity in the hearts of all. It is from that moment that we trace the bitter remembrance of the blood shed in the cause of Rome ; which, however, partial and unjust it must seem to an historic observer, still lies graven deep in the temper of the English people."

A temper that, we may truthfully add, was not lost in the life of the Puritan emigration of the Seventeenth Century that laid the foundations of the religious and national life that controls to-day the destinies of North America.

Following the death of Cranmer, Cardinal Pole became the Archbishop of Canterbury. His time serving career, with its shifting policies, is a matter of historic record. He was the chief adviser of Mary. The fires at Smithfield still burned. Every effort was made to restore confiscated lands and rebuild the monasteries. But public sentiment resented this action. The new Pope Paul IV. detested Philip, who had deserted the wife whose affection clung to him to the last. He disliked Pole and the lack of sympathy on the part of the Pope filled Mary's cup of misery, full to the brim. Long broken in health the end came November 17, 1558.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND DURING THE REIGN OF QUEEN ELIZABETH.

By reason of their exalted station and influence, kings and queens often fill a place in the narration of history that overrates their influence as factors in movements that change the currents of national life. As the fires of Smithfield die down and the half crazed, fanatical Mary goes to her grave execrated and unmourned by the great body of the English people, let us rapidly look back over the centuries that prepared England for the reign of the proud, wilful, masculine daughter of Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn.

The suns of a thousand years had risen and set since Gregory discovered the fair-haired Saxon lads in the slave mart at Rome. In all the vast missionary work that faithful priests carried forward with implicit obedience under the Papal See, none bore richer and more beneficial fruit than the work inaugurated by St. Augustine in Britain. It was the labors of these earnest men that lifted the shadows of pagan superstition from the dull, brute, minds of the conquered natives of the soil and the Saxon marauders who had crossed the stormy channel from their rude forest homes in North Germany. In this story that tells of human weakness, prostituting and poisoning the very sources of Christian life, we must not forget the blessings and guidance that the Roman Church in the early centuries gave in the conversion and uplifting of the barbarian races of the North. Her mis-

sionaries carried the uplifted Cross into every nook and corner of the then forest covered and untilled lands where dwelt the fierce tribes whose massed forces in their brute strength had overrun and destroyed imperial Rome and made possible the rearing of the ecclesiastical structure that was to be the dominant influence in coming centuries. The "old, old" story of the "Man of Galilee" had subdued rough pagan hearts. These fathers and mothers of the Teutonic races gave birth to leaders of a democracy, who, in due time, broke the shackles alike of feudalism and papal supremacy. They were the converts of a Church whose fountain head we trace back to Apostolic days.

Many a traveller, looking out over the broken columns and triumphal arches of ancient Rome has shared in the feelings so vividly pictured in the pages of Gibbon. Multitudes of travellers from the New World, visiting for the first time Netley Abbey, or some other ruined English monastery, has been deeply moved. There have come thoughts of thanksgiving for the faith that impelled men to carry the Gospel tidings into this land, now so fair, but then rude and desolate, the dwelling place of paganism. How real and dominant was the Christian faith that illuminated these ignorant hearts. It may appear to us, in our boasted wisdom, a very childish, limited vision; but it wrought mighty changes. It lifted the imagination of men, whose ancestors were dwellers in caves and rude hewers of stone, to heights where they reared such walls and domes and spires that men gaze with wonder at the handiwork of genius, inspired by spiritual vision; and worship at altars whose foundations were laid by humble, devout hands centuries before the discovery of America.



But spiritual pride and idleness, born of ill-gotten bounty, wrought mischief. The day came when a proud, wilful king was to be providentially used as an instrument in razing to the ground the walls of monasteries that had become foul breeding places of sin. But we ought not to forget the days when devout men dwelt within their walls; men who chanted the prayers and hymns of Augustine and Bernard of Clairvaux with spiritual fervor; men who went forth to daily toil that subdued the land and made it bud and blossom as the rose; men who were the teachers of the people in the years that gave birth to the English language and its marvellous heritage of literature. Protestantism did not spring out of the ground. It was a part of that struggle for democracy as opposed to monarchical principles, that goes back in its beginnings to the teachings of Christ and the day of Pentecost. The history of the English people is the history of the victories of a Christian democracy. We dwell upon this fact because of its significance in the life of Christianity and the continuity of faith, and its relation to the history of the Teutonic races and nations whose life and institutions have come to their highest realization in the United States and the British Dominion of North America. Further on we shall refer to the profound significance of these facts of history in their bearing upon those questions of Christian Unity and Church Unity that are matters of crucial importance in this Twentieth Century.

Cathedral towers, university cloisters, palace walls and monasteries, well tilled fields, and growing towns, with their signs of material wealth, give evidence of the civilizing, uplifting power of Christianity in the centuries before the full dawn of the Reformation. But these



were the outward signs of the struggles through which democracy came to its leadership in Church and State. The Norman conquest mingled gentle blood with the tough fibre of Saxon strength. The French and Latin tongues, woven into the Anglo-Saxon dialect, gave that medium of speech and letters that made possible the work of John Wiclif and scholars who were the advance guard of the New Learning. Common interests and common enemies at last welded together Norman and Saxon life. The Thirteenth Century begins to shape the constitution of unwritten law that lies to-day at the foundation of English and American democratic institutions.

The Great Charter (1215) by which the rights of the people were confirmed, established the Parliament that enforced and sustained them. In all this history we discover a providential preparation for the great change that was to destroy papal supremacy; give an open Bible to the people; quicken intellectual and moral life; and suppress sources of ecclesiastical corruption. In brief survey, this is the story of years, filled with struggle, and often dark with battle storms, that made possible the progress of the Reformation under Henry the VIII. and so welded the temper of the people in the fires of Smithfield that the power of Rome was forever broken.

The Princess Elizabeth succeeded to the throne of England at a time when her masculine strength of mind and will, combined with an intuitive tactfulness, enabled her to make wise use of the shifting winds of political and ecclesiastical life. Proud and imperious, with a beauty of person that gave a queenly stamp to her every action, Elizabeth kept such a firm hold upon state affairs that her decisions did much to guide England through days that

were filled with stormy conflicts on the Continent that threatened, in connection with the plottings of the Queen of Scotland and Roman Catholic emissaries at home and abroad, to undermine the throne to which they, and Rome, said she had no legitimate right. The policies of Elizabeth were dictated by neither strong convictions or a desire to further the interests of the Protestant party. The lips that again and again opened to break in bursts of wrathful profanity at the council board surrounded by venerable prelates, revealed a heart that had little space for religious feeling or convictions. Wisely she sought the aid of men like Cecil and Archbishop Parker. They, and men of kindred spirit, were the leaders who during the reign of Elizabeth, laid firm the foundations of the Church of England, and guided civil and ecclesiastical affairs. Protestantism came more and more to the front in the life of the people. It was the spring time hour of a new democracy that found its seed thought in the Old as well as the New Testament; thought and principles that were as iron in the blood, that produced what Lord Macauley named as "the most remarkable body of men, perhaps, the world has ever seen,"—the Puritans of England and Scotland.

The early years of Elizabeth's reign were marked by a trend of civil affairs and material prosperity that strengthened the hold of Protestantism on the life of the English people. Its young intellectual life was in sympathy with the new democracy. The daughters of the nobility, and of prosperous middle class homes that were enjoying the prosperity that attended the increase of commerce and manufactures, emulated the example of the Queen and many became proficient scholars in Latin, Greek, and

Italian. They were for the most part the children of Protestant homes and devout members of the Church of England. The indignation that had flamed into a white heat at the burning of Cranmer was widespread, but conditions existed that only astute statesmanship could control.

Elizabeth was singularly fortunate in the choice of Cecil as her minister. He "was eminently a safe man, not an original thinker, but a counsellor of unrivaled wisdom." The encomium to his worth from the queen herself was rightly won. "This judgment," she said, "I have of you that you will not be corrupted with any manner of gifts, and that you will be faithful to the State." Unlike his royal mistress, whom he so faithfully served, Cecil had convictions and the courage to assert them. If he was unwilling to jeopardize the safety and prosperity of England by aiding the Dutch and French Protestants in the struggles that threatened their existence, he did not take counsel with timid fears in the conduct of national affairs. Again and again he struck with a heavy hand as he felt the occasion demanded. This was illustrated in the stern decree that sent Mary, queen of Scots, to the scaffold. It was this, and other stern actions, that broke the plans and spirit of traitors who, in the interest of Rome, plotted the assassination of Elizabeth and the wresting of the Crown from the control of Protestant leaders. As the days went on Cecil became more earnest in his adherence to the Protestant faith.

It is evident that Elizabeth at the time of her coronation, if not an ardent Protestant, had little love for Rome. At this period the ceremonials of the Roman Church, revived by Mary, were conducted in the churches by the

bishops she had appointed and the priests whom they controlled. The newly crowned queen "went to Mass, but asked the Bishop officiating not to elevate the Host for adoration; and when he refused to comply, she and her ladies swept out of church immediately after the Gospel was read. Parliament was opened in the usual manner with the performance of the Mass, but the Queen did not appear until it was over; and then her procession was preceded by a choir which sang hymns in English. When the Abbot of Westminster met her in ecclesiastical procession with the usual candles sputtering in the hands of his clergy, the Queen shouted, 'Away with these torches; we have light enough.'"<sup>1</sup>

The Spanish ambassador, early in her reign, reported to his royal master that the Queen "is every day standing up against religion (Roman) more openly and all the heretics who had escaped are beginning to flock back again from Germany." At this time the clergy, appointed during the reaction under Mary, taught transubstantiation, offered the sacrifice of the Mass and upheld the supremacy of the Pope. Parliament however, through the House of Commons, reflected popular opinion and feeling. In spite of the opposition of the bishops appointed by Mary, the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity were adopted and Elizabeth received the title, Supreme Head of the Church of England, and it was enjoined that the communion should be given in both "kinds."

The Act of Uniformity restored the order of public service and the administration of ordinances as set forth in the "Book of Common Prayer" authorized by Parlia-

<sup>1</sup>Lindsay. History of the Reformation, Vol. II, pp. 389, 390.

ment in the reign of Edward VI. Freedom of thought was fully granted, but the line was drawn hard as to the form of worship. Long and wearisome discussions delayed this enactment. Easter Day (1559) was approaching when the Canon law required every one to attend communion. On this day "Her Majesty appeared in chapel, where Mass was sung in English, according to the use of her brother Edward."<sup>1</sup>

The Act of Uniformity, with slight changes, restored the Prayer Book of 1552. Even the advanced reformers appear to have been satisfied. A rubric that enjoined the use in public worship of vestments in the early reign of Edward VI. was the cause of sharp contention. Just how this rubric found a place in the Elizabethan Prayer Book is an unsolved mystery. We know it was ignored by the Protestant bishops and, under their direction, by the clergy. Even the surplice was not always worn. Drastic action in the removal of ecclesiastical "ornaments" was taken. A letter of the Spanish Ambassador (State papers, 1559,) informs Philip that "they are now carry-

<sup>1</sup>The chronicle further on says (see Calendar of State Papers Venetian, 1558-80, p. 57): "Since that day things have returned to their former state, though unless the Almighty stretch forth His arm a relapse is expected. These accursed preachers, who have come from Germany, do not fail to preach in their own fashion, both in public and in private, in such wise that they persuaded certain rogues to forcibly enter the church of St. Mary-le-Bow, in the middle of Cheapside, and force the shrine of the most Holy Sacrament, breaking the tabernacle and throwing the most precious consecrated body of Jesus Christ to the ground. They also destroyed the altar and the images, with the pall and church linen, breaking everything into a thousand pieces. This happened this very night, which is the third after Easter."

ing out the law of Parliament respecting religion with great rigour. \* \* \* They have just taken the crosses, images, and altars from St. Paul's and all the other London churches."

In pursuing her policy of pleasing, as far as possible, all parties, Elizabeth permitted the use of vestments and lights on the altar of the Royal Chapel, but she was careful not to antagonize the influential Lutheran leadership that was now active in Protestant circles. She understood full well the attitude of Rome. The Peace of Augsburg was the convenient shelter to which she purposed to flee if the thunder of the papal excommunication broke in upon her days of strangely mingled statecraft, intellectual employments, and frivolous pleasure.

The death of Cardinal Pole opened the way for the appointment of Matthew Parker as Archbishop of Canterbury. With his consecration an end came to much of the bitter dissension that of necessity had arisen out of the reaction under Mary that had reinstated Roman Catholic bishops in the English dioceses. As death caused vacancies Protestants were appointed and changes that were revolutionary in their character, were brought to pass without special disturbance. England was more and more becoming a stronghold of Protestantism. Elizabeth and her chief counsellors wisely recognized the trend of popular feeling and sentiment. The second Parliament of the Queen's reign and the Convocation of 1563 brought about the adoption of the *Thirty-nine Articles*. They laid firm the foundations of the Church of England. Material prosperity and political conditions at home and abroad strengthened the power and influence of Protestantism. A debased coinage, that had been the source of



evils that were a constant irritant and menace, was replaced with honest gold and silver. Some of it not altogether honestly filched from Philip's treasure ships laden with the spoils of the New World. Thriving commerce and manufactures and agriculture gave shipowners, merchants, farmers, and tradesmen the wealth that built streets of stately houses in London and reared country homes whose palatial architecture and beautiful gardens vied with the royal palaces that Elizabeth loved to build and visit with her gay retinue of flattering courtiers. The adventurous voyages of Drake, and seamen of like spirit, opened gateways to the outer world that kindled the imagination of a generation that finds in Shakespeare the consummate flowering of its intellectual quickening and genius.

But there were deeper influences than these working with a mighty leavening power in the life of England. The Bible became the one book of the people. It was the fountain of devotional exercises in church and home. Its revealed truths, as taught in history and biography, and lifted in the strains of sublime Psalmody and prophecy; the marvellous messages uttered by the wayside and seashore by the Divine Teacher who spoke as man never spoke—were reverently accepted as the bread and water of life; food that nourished the spiritual life of fathers and mothers whose sons and daughters were to be the Puritan leaders of democracy both in the Old and New World. Of this life and the part it has played in the history of American Christianity reference will be made in a later chapter.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE REFORMATION IN SCOTLAND.

Scotland emerged very slowly out of the early period in which her kings and barons struggled for power in fierce and lawless warfare. The feudal assembly, known as the Estates of the Realm, was controlled by contending factions whose quarrels robbed it of stable influence. For more than seven centuries the old Celtic Church was the source not only of the religious life of the people, but of the educational privileges that taught the boys and girls to read. Every Celtic monastery was a centre of educational influence. From them came many of the teachers who built up the reputation of the older universities of the North. When the Roman Church supplanted the Celtic Church its educational system remained an active and potent force. The love of learning found many Scotch students in the crowd of wandering scholars who filled the universities of Europe in medieval times.

“The country,” says Professor Lindsay, “had been prepared for the Reformation by the education of the people, especially of the middle class, by constant intercourse between Scotland and France and the Low Countries, and by the sympathy which Scottish students had felt for the earlier movements towards Church reform in England and Bohemia; while the wealth and immorality of the Romish clergy, the poverty of the nobility and landed gentry, and the changing political situation, combined to give an impetus to the efforts of those who longed for a Reformation.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lindsay. History of the Reformation, Vol. II, p. 275.

The influence of Wiclif and the Lollards was widely felt. As early as 1433, Paul Craw, who had visited Scotland, with the purpose of advancing the Hussite movement, fell a victim to the Inquisition, and was burned at the stake. The wealth that had come into the hands of the Roman Church attracted into its service many of the younger sons of the nobility whose lives were often shameful. The ships that carried on an active commerce with the Continent, in spite of the Edicts of Parliament, hid Lutheran books and pamphlets in their cargoes that found eager buyers and readers. Patrick Hamilton, of noble lineage, was the first in the line of Scotland's martyrs. While a student in the University of Paris he became interested in the work of Luther. On his return home he came under the suspicion of the heresy hunters. Escaping to Germany he was active in the councils of the Lutheran leaders. His heart turned homeward with the desire to advance the Reformation in Scotland. His message found a ready welcome but his voice was soon hushed in flames kindled by the hands of Romish persecutors (February 27, 1528). A long line of "noble martyrs" are found in the years that follow. In Scotland, as in other lands, the burning of heretics increased rather than lessened the number of those who joined the ranks of the Reformers.

On the death of James V. (1542) his infant daughter, Mary, became the Queen of Scotland. Under the Regency the years are filled with plots and counter-plots by which the Tudor kings sought to secure control of the country beyond their northern boundary and break up threatening alliances with France. David Beaton, Archbishop of St. Andrews, was the astute leader of the

French and Romanish partisans in Scotland. He was an instrument ready to do the bidding of the Pope in the coming conflict with Henry VIII. In the struggle for the Regency, under Mary, Beaton was defeated and imprisoned. For a little space the hunting of heretics ceased. Then came a period of truce in which the contending leaders made peace. With the reconciliation of the Earl of Arran and Cardinal Beaton the days of persecution reopened. Mary, under the tutelage of the French court, was being trained for the sad after years of her unhappy reign.

In the midst of all this political tumult and strife for supremacy in the civil affairs of Scotland, the leaven of a pure, spiritual faith was effectively working in Scottish homes and hearts. George Wishart, fleeing from persecution, had come into close touch with the leaders of the Reformation in England, Germany and Switzerland. Returning to Scotland about 1543, he proclaimed his message in Montrose, Dundee and other places. After a preaching tour in the Lothians he was seized by the command of Beaton and after confinement in the dungeon at St. Andrews, was tried in the cathedral and sent to the stake (March 1, 1546).

At this point the foremost figure in the history of the Reformation in Scotland appears upon the stage. John Knox was the close companion of Wishart in his tour in the Lothians. The friendship of these men was like that of David and Jonathan. The early life of Knox is shrouded in obscurity. We only know he enjoyed the blessings of a home of frugal habits and prosperity, based upon religious principles. After his graduation from St. Andrews we know little of his career for twenty years.

In 1543 he signed himself "minister of the sacred altar" under the Archbishop of St. Andrews. Three years later he was standing by the side of Wishart. After Wishart's execution he became a fugitive from the Romish hate that planned the death of every heretic.

Learning of the assassination of Cardinal Beaton he hastened to join the party that had plotted the death of this cruel murderer of men whose shoes lachet he was unworthy to unloose. While making his home in the castle of St. Andrews Knox taught "John's Gospel" and had charge of a catechetical class of children. He at first declined the urgent request to accept "the public office and charge of preaching." This call was finally pressed from the pulpit itself with unanimous approval. "Whereat, the said John, abashed, burst forth in most abundant tears and withdrew himself to his chamber." He came forth from the consecration and decisions of that hour changed in spirit and filled with courage that never faltered. From that hour until his death John Knox, in his wonderful ministry and leadership as a reformer, feared not the face of man.

Taken prisoner when the garrison of St. Andrews surrendered to the French fleet (1547), Knox was carried to France. With his companions he was made a galley-slave. For nineteen months he sat chained with four to six others, to the rowing benches. Day and night, even when they slept, they were chained under the benches. Fed with the poorest food and placed in close companionship with the vilest malefactors it is difficult to conceive what the French Papists could have done more to add to the misery of these innocent prisoners. The narrative penned by Knox vividly recalls this terrible experience.

"How long I continued prisoner, what torment I sustained in the galies, and what war the sobbes of my harte, is now no time to reecat. This only I can nocht conceall, which mo than one have hard me say, when the body was far absent from Scotland, that my assured houp was in opp in audience to preach in Sauctandrois befoir I depairted this lyeff."<sup>1</sup>

Released at last, Knox began his great work as a leader and preacher of the Reformation. In 1552 he was offered an English bishopric but declined.<sup>2</sup> His suggestion secured the Prayer Book rubric which explains that when kneeling at the sacrament is ordered, "No adoration is intended or ought to be done." When Mary came to the throne of England Knox for a time tarried in London. While there he "had the courage to rebuke the rejoicings of the crowd at her (Mary's) entry into the capital—a fearless, outspoken man who could always be depended on for doing what no one else dared."

We now find Knox on the Continent in consultation with Calvin at Geneva, and Bullinger at Zurich. With the exception of a brief visit to Scotland the years 1554-58 were spent on the continent. He was forging the thunderbolts that were afterwards launched in asserting the rights of the people to restrain tyrannical sovereigns. His pastorate at Geneva was a happy and peaceful one. With other scholarly exiles he prepared the English version of the Bible that in the reign of Elizabeth became "the household book of the English speaking nations." Days that were to be filled with stormy conflict were near at

<sup>1</sup>Works of John Knox, I, p. 349.

<sup>2</sup>See page 184.

hand. From the pleasant Geneva home in which he had enjoyed the loving care both of his wife and mother, Knox hurried to Edinburgh in the spring of 1559 and was soon in "the brunt of the battle." Condemned as an outlaw he fearlessly preached in the chief towns of Scotland: The support given to him by the civic authorities of St. Andrews, and, as he notes, by "the rascal multitude" of Perth reveals the temper of the people. Even in Edinburgh the queen regent permitted an arrangement, under the pressure of popular feeling, that permitted Knox and his associates to give their message from the pulpits that faced crowded congregations.

In the alliance by which Scotland came into close union with Protestant England Knox was a foremost leader. But it was his destiny, while aiding in this work, "beyond all other men, to leave the stamp of a more inward independence upon his country and its history." In 1560, at the request of the Estates, Knox and three others drafted a confession of faith. It bears the stamp of his Genevan training and ministry. A Calvinistic confession it remained for two centuries the authorized Scottish creed. Acts passed at this time reveal that Protestants had not learned the spirit or meaning of tolerance. The Pope's authority and jurisdiction were abolished and heavy penalties, with death on third conviction, were inflicted on those who should attend mass or even be present at it. The Reformed churches grew so rapidly that before the close of the year the first General Assembly made up of their representatives, became "the whole Church convened." Knox was the chief framer of the Book of Discipline which provided a rigid Presbyterian system of government. Special attention was given to the religious in-



struction of the young from elementary schools up to the universities. These schools, as well as the poor, and the ministers, were to be supported from the "tithes of yearly fruits." This plan was at first opposed by some of the lords who had acquired much of the ancient Church property. Seven years later the Crown acknowledged the Kirk the only Church of Scotland with full jurisdiction over all outsiders. The stipends of the ministers of the Scottish Church were paid out of the "yearly tithes" and until recent times the administration of the schools and the Poor Laws were in its hands.

When Mary, Queen of Scots, in 1561 returned from France to her native land, she put forth every effort to destroy the "Kirk" that had so swiftly swept away the old foundations. There are few episodes of more dramatic interest in the history of the Reformation than that which tells the story of John Knox and his contention with the proud Queen whose fascinating personality and urgent appeals could not swerve him in the least from what he conceived to be the path of duty. In the progress of events there came an hour of such distress that even the spirit of Knox standing in its shadow, cried out, "Lord Jesus, put an end to this my miserable life, for justice and truth are not to be found among the sons of men." During a visit to England, where two of his sons were being educated at Cambridge, word came to him of the tragic events following the murder of Darnley. Returning to Scotland he took a leading part in the Assembly that met June 25, 1567. His voice uttered the pulpit message at Stirling at the coronation of James VI., the infant son of the deposed Queen. Parliament again voted the Confession of Faith and engrossed it in their



Acts, which were signed by the Regent acting for the king. From this time on the Reformed Church was legally recognized in Scotland and its Confession became part of the law of the land.

While his great life work was accomplished the figure of Knox holds a foremost place in Scottish history from this time on until his death. Mary's escape in 1568 was followed by the defeat of her adherents at Langside and her long imprisonment and final execution in England. The Civil War, brought on by the assassination of Knox's friend, the regent Moray, did not succeed in its plans. When tidings came of the massacre of St. Bartholomew Knox, from the pulpit of St. Giles, "challenged the French Ambassador to report his words, and denounced God's vengeance on the crowned murderer and his posterity." When the civil conflict broke out between the adherents of Mary and the town of Edinburgh both parties agreed to the removal of Knox, who had suffered an attack of paralysis, to St. Andrews. He here published his last book and wrote his last will. In the preface to his book he says: "I heartily take my good-night of the faithful in both realms \* \* \* for as the world is weary of me, so am I of it." Returning to Edinburgh in the autumn he died on the 24th of November, 1572. As Morton, the new regent of Scotland said at his burial in St. Giles Churchyard, looking back over the stormy life of Knox, it was a matter of surprise that the man who had "neither flattered nor feared any flesh had ended his days in peace and honor."

As long as Scotland exists and the story of the Reformation and the Reformed Churches that sprang out of it is told, the name and fame of John Knox will not be forgotten.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE REFORMATION IN SWITZERLAND. ZWINGLI AND OECOLAMPADIUS.

The story of the Reformation in Switzerland centres especially about two men, Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin. Zwingli was the chief founder of the Reformed Churches of Europe and America. Calvin holds the same relation to the great Presbyterian fellowship throughout the world. Like the Alpine heights that overlooked the scenes of their earthly labors the nearer they are approached the loftier and grander is seen to be the range of their character and influence. They were pioneers in recovering the long lost principles of democracy laid down in the New Testament, upon which to-day rests the superstructure of republican institutions. Great in character and great in intellectual and statesmanlike qualities, they were called to their providential work in the environment of a land whose valleys and mountains from the days when the Waldensens sought their shelter, have been a place of refuge for brave spirits who have led the battle hosts of God's elect against the serried ranks of hierarchical supremacy and oppression.

Ulrich Zwingli was born in a free peasant's chalet in one of the Swiss valleys.<sup>1</sup> Early destined for the Church he made his home, when but a lad, with an uncle who was the parish priest of Wildhaus. From the schools of

<sup>1</sup>January 1, 1484, at Wildhaus in the Toggenburg valley, in the canton of St. Gall.

Basel and Berne he came under the training of the Dominican monastery in that city. An enthusiastic student of classical literature, after his graduation from the University at Basel, he became a teacher of this literature that, in its higher ethical expression, left an abiding impression upon his life and thought. "Luther," says Professor Armitage, "never quite shook off scholasticism, whereas Zwingli had early learned from Dr. Thomas Wytttenbach that the time was at hand when scholastic theology must give place to the purer and more rational theology of the early Fathers and to a fearless study of the New Testament. He heard from this same teacher bold criticisms of Romish teaching concerning the sacraments, monastic vows and papal indulgences, and unconsciously he was thus trained for the great remonstrance of his later years."<sup>1</sup>

The name of this Basel university professor is worthy of special mention. Wytttenbach, ten years before Luther nailed his theses on the church door at Wittenberg, had posted theses of similar import at Basel, and boldly taught that the Bible and not the Church was the supreme guide and that forgiveness of sin came through Jesus Christ and not by the importunity of the Virgin Mary and the saints. At the age of twenty-two Zwingli was appointed parish priest of Glarus. Continuing his favorite classical studies he gave special attention to Greek that he might "learn the teaching of Christ from the original sources." At this time he came under the influence of Erasmus, with whom he was in frequent correspondence.

In the history of these days, in which political

<sup>1</sup>Article *Zwingli*. Encyclopedia Britannica. Eleventh edition.

and religious affairs are so inextricably mingled, it will help us to better understand the work of Calvin and Zwingli if we remember that "no nation was so absolutely without a central government as the Swiss." In the Swiss cantons the people governed themselves. There were no feudal lordships. The communes and villages were little republics of a primitive Teutonic type. "If therefore in a Swiss canton the civil power took to itself the ecclesiastical power hitherto held by the Pope, that power became vested in the *people*, not as in other countries, in the *prince* or king." Political opinion at Glarus favored alliance with France that was disapproved by Zwingli and he was glad to accept the position of priest at Einsiedeln. At this time (1516-19) his religious convictions became fixed and he entered upon labors as an evangelical leader and teacher that continued until his death. "He had none of Luther's distrust of the 'common man' and fear of popular government, and this fact won for his teaching the favour of the towns of South Germany not less than Switzerland."

In 1518, Zwingli, in the face of considerable opposition, sought and obtained the place of people's priest as the Great Minister of Zurich. Already he was a marked man. His sermons, founded upon a profound mastery of the New Testament, attracted wide attention. Corruption in State and Church alike met his scathing condemnation. It was in these days that we find his views conflicting with those of Luther. Mention has already been made of the unhappy outcome of efforts that sought to remove these differences.<sup>1</sup> Zwingli always contended that he had dis-

<sup>1</sup>See page 139.

covered the Gospel message before the name of Luther was known in Switzerland. Following an illness, in which he fell the victim of a prevailing plague, he preached more earnestly than ever before against the celibacy of priests, fasting and saint worship. With others of like spirit he joined in an address to the Bishop of Constance asking him to grant permission to the priests to marry. The contention reached the Pope (Adrian VI.), who asked the Zurichers to dismiss the recreant priest. But the eloquent and courageous preacher was upheld in his course and the canton voted to sever its connection with the bishopric of Constance.

Strong opposition to the Reformation arose in the five Forest Cantons.<sup>1</sup> A league of defence was formed and as the result of a great public disputation in Berne that brought together 350 ecclesiastics, that important canton was won over to the party led by Zwingli. The propositions defended in this meeting went to the root of the matter.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lucerne, Zug, Schwyz, Uri, and Unterwalden.

<sup>2</sup>They were as follows: (1) That the Holy Christian Church of which Christ is the only Head, is born of the Word of God, abides therein, and does not listen to the voice of a stranger; (2) that this Church imposes no laws on the conscience of the people without the sanction of the Word of God, and that the laws of the Church are binding only in so far as they agree with the Word; (3) that Christ alone is our righteousness and our salvation, and that to trust to any other merit or satisfaction is to deny Him; (4) that it cannot be proved from the Holy Scripture that the body and blood of Christ are corporeally present in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper; (5) that the mass, in which Christ is offered to God the Father for the sins of the living and of the dead, is contrary to Scripture and a gross affront to the sacrifice and death of the Saviour; (6) that we should not

Zwingli held that the congregation, and not the hierarchy, was the representative of the Church. He led the contest that sought to incorporate in the Swiss Constitution the principles of representative democracy. Many of his colleagues followed his example in publicly celebrating his happy marriage with Anna Reinhard. The same year (1524) he published a pamphlet giving his views regarding the Lord's Supper. In a congress that was attended by about 900 delegates his voice was raised against the use of images and the doctrine of the mass with such effect that the churches were stripped of their ornaments and many festivals and ceremonies abolished. This action aroused the fierce opposition of the dominant Roman Catholic party in the Forest Cantons. A diet held at Lucerne (January 26, 1524,) sent a message of rebuke to Zurich that met a response declaring that she would listen to no interference "in matters relating to the Word of God and the salvation of souls."

In the spring of 1525 Zwingli published his *Commentary on the True and False Religion*. "Like others of the Reformers he had been led independently to preach justification by faith and to declare that Jesus Christ was the one and only Mediator between sinful men and God; but his construction rested upon what he regarded as Biblical

pray to dead mediators and intercessors, but to Jesus Christ alone; (7) that there is no trace of purgatory in Scripture; (8) that to set up pictures and to adore them is also contrary to Scripture, and that images and pictures ought to be destroyed where there is danger of giving them adoration; (9) that marriage is lawful to all, to the clergy as well as to the laity; (10) that shameful living is more disgraceful among the clergy than among the laity.



conceptions of the nature of God and men rather than upon such private personal experiences as those which Luther had made basal. In this commentary there appears the mature views of Zwingli on the subject of the Elements of the Lord's Supper. He was quite as clear as Luther in repudiating the medieval doctrine of transubstantiation, but he declined to accept Luther's teaching that Christ's words of institution required the belief that the real flesh and blood of Christ co-exist in and with the natural elements. He declared that Luther was in a fog, and that Christ had warned His disciples against all such notions, and had proclaimed that by faith alone could His presence be received in a feast which He designed to be commemorative and symbolical."<sup>1</sup>

In the autumn of 1529 the landgrave of Hesse brought the leaders of the Reformation together for conference. The hope that the Lutheran and Reformed Churches might be united in the contest against Rome was not realized. Luther could not forget the friendship of Zwingli and Erasmus, and was unwilling to change his literal interpretation of the words of consecration for the more spiritual and mythical conception of Zwingli. Luther was human. It was not in his nature to yield at any point when he had taken a position. His violent dislike of Erasmus, and those who were at all rationalistic in their views and philosophy, added to an evident personal prejudice against Zwingli, appears in the action on his part that closed this conference. It was the parting of the ways continued until to-day. Again we have come to a century in

<sup>1</sup>Professor Armstrong. Article *Zwingli*. Encyclopedia Britannica. Eleventh edition.



which we hope and pray and rejoice in signs that promise the growing unity of the Church of which Christ is the Head, but the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century in its liberation of thought and freedom of opinion must needs be an era of division. It is a wonderful history that both the Reformed and Lutheran Churches have made in the past four centuries in advancing the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Who shall say that it was not best that October day in 1529 that Luther and Zwingli went their separate ways?

The work of Zwingli was drawing to a tragic close. The Romanist cantons in 1529 made an attack on Zurich that was averted by a truce that lasted only for a few months. In 1531 the second Cappel war broke out. In the battle, where Romanist strength and numbers prevailed, Zwingli, who as chaplain, was carrying the Protestant banner, was struck down and killed with barbarous cruelty. Upon the hugh boulder that marks the place where he fell these words are inscribed: "‘They may kill the body but not the soul,’ so spoke on this spot Ulrich Zwingli, who for truth and the freedom of the Christian Church died a hero’s death, Oct. 3, 1531."

"Thus died," says Dr. James I. Good, "‘for his faith and his country,’ the only one of the first four leading Reformers (Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingli, and Ecolampadius) who gave his life for his faith. He was not a martyr as were the martyr-Reformers Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, who were burned at the stake. And yet he no less gave his life for his religion, for he knew that Zurich would be defeated at Cappel. He was the only one of the great Continental Reformers who sealed his faith with his blood. He was a great man in many ways,

great as a theologian, as patriot, as a musician, as an orator and as a Reformer." The story of the Reformed Church, which Zwingli founded, is woven into the history of Southern Switzerland, Holland, Germany, Hungary, France, Scotland, and the United States, and lives in missionary activities that have carried their influences to the ends of the earth.

John Oecolampadius was the leader of the Reformation in Basel. A zealous student of the new learning he was appointed cathedral preacher at Basel in 1515. In 1520 he was called to preach in the high church at Augsburg and soon became an earnest champion of Luther. After a brief experience of monastic life he returned to Basel and from this time on stood by the side of Zwingli. Together they led in the movement that brought Berne and Basel into the Reformed ranks.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE REFORMATION IN GENEVA UNDER JOHN CALVIN.

Next to Wittenberg, Geneva was the fountain head of the Reformation. It has been truthfully said that "Luther was too national—too German—a reformer, to admit of his becoming the universal prophet of Protestantism all over the world. Denmark, Sweden, and Norway coming under German influence, did indeed become Lutheran; but the Protestants of France, Holland, Switzerland, England, Scotland, and their descendants in America are not and never have been Lutherans."<sup>1</sup> Geneva, under Calvin, and Zurich under Zwingli, were the source of influences that were dominant in the Reformed faith.

Under its ancient constitution (1387) Geneva recognized the triple authority of the Bishop as sovereign Prince; the Count who held the citadel; and the Free Burghers. In the conflicts between these parties the bishops and the burghers generally united against the Count who represented the House of Savoy. For many decades the Church, by a wise recognition of the rights of the people, held the place of leadership. This place it lost when the bishopric finally came under the control of the House of Savoy. Episcopal scandals and misused power aroused fierce indignation and the Genevans sought an alliance with the cantons of Freiburg and Berne. This alliance brought about arrangements (1530) by which Geneva was governed by a two chambered Council whose

<sup>1</sup>Seebohm. *The Era of the Protestant Revolution*, p. 201.

decisions were submitted for final adoption to a General Council composed of all the citizens.

Already the leaven of Reformed truth was working in the life of the city. In the summer of 1532 this ferment of feeling found popular vent. Following the publication of a papal Indulgence, the burghers discovered one morning posted on all the church doors, the announcement that "plenary pardon would be granted to every one for all their sins on the one condition of repentance, and a living faith in the promises of Jesus Christ." The city was in a tumult of commotion. Priests hastened to tear down the placards sorely alarmed over the evidence that hated Lutherans were at work undermining their influence. In the autumn of 1532 a reformer entered the city who was to be a John the Baptist in preparing the way for Calvin.

William Farel was born of a noble family (1489), having their home near Gap, in France. A graduate of the University of Paris he was for a time professor in the college of Cardinal Lemoine. In 1521 he joined the company at Meaux that sought to stem the tide of Reformation by instituting reforms within the Church of Rome. When persecution dispersed this group, Farel found his way to Basel. Welcomed by Oecolampadius in 1524 he issued thirteen theses, "sharply antagonizing Roman doctrine." The heat of temper in which he defended his position stirred the indignation of Erasmus, then a resident of the city, and with the help of others, he made it so uncomfortable for Farel that he sought refuge elsewhere. Wandering for a time from one place to another he finally secured a license to preach anywhere within the Canton of Berne. In his evangelistic tours he ventured into neighboring cantons. Undaunted by persecution he ut-

tered his denunciatory messages with eloquent and restless energy. "In October, 1530, he broke into the Church of Neuchatel with an iconoclastic mob, thus planting the Reformation in that city." Two years later he visited the Waldenses and on his return stopped at Geneva. Conditions, as we have seen, favored the restless spirit of Farel. He began to preach in a room where he lodged and his message attracted wide attention. Summoned before the bishops' court he was treated shamefully and commanded to leave the city within three hours. By this time the Protestant canton of Berne felt compelled to come to the support of their brother in Geneva, and through their intervention, liberty of worship, in the spring of 1533, was granted the Reforming party in that city. Farel returned from his brief exile and at once gained a place of leadership. Events moved fast. The bishop on the first day of January, 1534, interdicted all unauthorized preaching and ordered the burning of all Protestant Bibles. This action added fuel to the flame of popular indignation, and Farel took part in public disputations that resulted in a decree (August 27, 1535,) that suppressed the mass and established the reformed religion.

It was during this very month that Calvin, in his retreat at Basel, penned the closing lines of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. "In this work, though produced when the author was only twenty-six years of age, we find a complete outline of the Calvinistic theological system. In none of the later editions, nor in any of his later works do we find reason to believe that he ever changed his views on any essential point from what they were at the period of its first publication. Such an instance of maturity of mind and of opinion at so early an

age would be remarkable under any circumstances; but in Calvin's case it is rendered peculiarly so by the shortness of the time which had elapsed since he gave himself to theological studies. It may be doubted also if the history of literature presents us with another instance of a book written at an early age, which has exercised such a prodigious influence upon the opinions and practices both of contemporaries and of posterity."<sup>1</sup>

Having completed his great work in August, 1535 (published in 1536), Calvin left Basel for a short visit to the court of Renée, then graced by the devout Duchess of Ferrara. Returning to Basel he soon went on to France to complete arrangements to settle in Strasburg and devote himself to study. The unsettled condition of affairs, owing to the war between Francis I. and Charles V. compelled him to take a circuitous route that brought him to Geneva. Here he met Farel and found his providential life work in that city. The story is vividly told by Calvin in the preface to his *Commentary on the Psalms*. "As the most direct route to Strasburg," he says, "to which I then intended to retire, was blocked by the wars, I had resolved to pass quickly by Geneva without staying longer than a single night in that city. \* \* \* A person (Louis du Tillet), who has now returned to the Papists, discovered me and made me known to others. Upon this Farel, who burned with an extraordinary zeal to advance the Gospel, immediately strained every nerve to detain me. After having learned that my heart was set upon devoting myself to private studies, for which I wished to keep myself

<sup>1</sup>Dr. William Lindsay Alexander and Professor Alexander James Grieve. Article *Calvin*. Ency. Britannica. Eleventh edition.

free from other pursuits, and finding that he gained nothing by entreaties, he proceeded to utter an imprecation that God would curse my retirement and the tranquility of the studies which I sought, if I should withdraw and refuse assistance when the necessity was so urgent. By this imprecation I was so stricken with terror that I desisted from the journey which I had undertaken."

We can scarcely imagine two men of more dissimilar temperaments than Calvin and Farel, but their friendship was such that the younger of these two men could say in after years, "We had one heart and one soul." Calvin when he yielded to the stern importunity of his future co-worker, was twenty-seven years of age, and Farel, twenty years his senior.

Before we enter upon the story of Calvin's great work in Geneva let us briefly recall the preceding years of his life. He was born at Noyon, in Picardy, France, July 10, 1509. His father was a man of considerable importance in the community, and his mother was a woman of unusual charm of person and character. John was the second of five sons. His early education, the expenses of which were defrayed by his father, was in the household of the noble family of de Montmor. Destined to an ecclesiastical career when but a youth he was officially attached to the cathedral of Noyon. From the income of this benefice he studied in Paris, making his home with an uncle. The regent of the college which he attended, Mathurin Cordier, a man of repute as a scholar, in after years followed his eminent pupil to Switzerland and died at Geneva in 1564. Calvin dedicated to him his *Commentary on the First Epistle to the Thessalonians*, expressing the "wish to testify to posterity that if any utility accrue to any



from my writings they may acknowledge it as having in part flowed from thee."

Making rapid progress in his studies and outstripping all of his competitors, especially in the languages and scholastic philosophy, he returned to Noyon to become curate of St. Martin. When the time arrived for a final decision regarding his ordination to the priesthood, there was hesitation on his part. His father used his influence to turn him to the profession of law. The career of a priest did not have the attractions of earlier years. Complying with his father's wish he entered upon the study of law at Orleans, and afterwards at Bourges. One of his Orleans friends, Melchor Wolmar, who also came to Bourges, taught him Greek. This opened to him the treasures of the New Testament that were then attracting attention in all the universities of Europe. We can easily imagine that the exciting events of these times had a large place in the thought of the brilliant young law student. The twelve years that had past since Luther nailed his theses on the door of the Crown church at Wittenberg had witnessed the kindling of a conflagration that was extending far beyond the bounds of Germany. Multitudes in France sympathized with the Reformation movement, although, as yet, there was no open revolt. Following the death of his father (May, 1531,) Calvin returned to Paris, and while pursuing his classical studies issued his first publication—a commentary in Latin on a tract of Seneca. In 1533 came the change in the life of Calvin which he describes as his "sudden conversion." A change by which his heart was "so subdued and reduced to docility that in comparison with his zeal for true piety he regarded all other studies with indifference, though

not entirely forsaking them. Though himself a beginner, many flocked to him to learn the pure doctrine, and he began to seek some hiding-place and means of withdrawal from people."

In this experience he was brought into close sympathy with an old friend of early student days, Nicholas Cop, who had been appointed rector of the university. In an address on All Saints, Cop uttered opinions regarding the reformed faith that aroused such opposition that he deemed it wise to seek a refuge in Basel. An attempt was made at the same time to seize Calvin, but he escaped and made his home for a time in Noyon. Returning to Paris, early in 1534 he accepted an invitation to become the guest of Louis du Tillet, a canon of the cathedral of Angoulême. Here in the splendid library of his friend he began the studies which bore fruit in his immortal work, *The Institutes*.

Calvin as he neared his twenty-fifth birthday made the decision that cast in his fortune with the reforming party. He suffered two short terms of imprisonment on charges that could not be sustained. For a time he made his home at Poitiers and it was in a grotto near the town that he celebrated for the first time the communion in the Evangelical Church of France. In 1534, accompanied by his friend Tillet, he went to Basel, where he "was welcomed by the band of scholars and theologians who had conspired to make that city the Athens of Switzerland." Calvin at once came to a position of marked influence. The double dealing policy of Francis I. in seeking to avoid a break with the Protestant princes of Germany by an assurance that his persecution of the French reformers was directed only against those who called in question the

power of civil magistrates, aroused his indignation and with almost incredible celerity he prepared his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* for publication. It was sent forth anonymously with the purpose, as its author said, "that I might vindicate from unjust affront my brethren whose death was precious in the sight of the Lord, and, next, that some sorrow and anxiety should move foreign peoples, since the same sufferings threatened many." The book was first written in Latin, "that it might find access to the learned in all lands." At an early date Calvin translated it into French. As edition after edition was called for the work was much enlarged. Little could the young reformer realize that the brief manual of Christian doctrine which he penned in such a white heat of intellectual vigor, was to be numbered among the books that have profoundly influenced the thought and convictions of untold multitudes of men and women; a book that has given guidance and strength to great leaders in Church and State, through the past four centuries of the Christian era.

#### CALVIN AND FAREL IN GENEVA.

As we have seen it was an unexpected providence that turned Calvin from the seclusion that he desired for the pursuit of his favorite studies, and placed him in the forefront of affairs at Geneva. The more we learn of Farel the better we like him. He certainly never let his tempestuous spirit act to better purpose than in the "imprecation" that startled the young friend whom he felt was the man to guide the reformation forces at a critical hour when the fate of Protestantism in Geneva and Switzerland was in the balance. Farel knew his own limitations.

His mission was to stir the hearts of men with a fiery message. He had not the qualities of statesmanship and theological insight that he felt Calvin possessed to a marked degree. His judgment proved correct. The man whom Erasmus could not abide because of his earnest evangelistic spirit and whom he helped to drive from Basel was to be the right hand of Calvin in his work at Geneva.

This work began with no blare of trumpets. A minute of the city Council under date of September 5, 1536, says: "Master William Farel stated the need for the lecture begun by *this Frenchman* in St. Peter's." These daily lectures were on the Epistles of St. Paul. The room was soon crowded and the reputation of the young professor grew apace. At an early date an occasion arose that tested his strength as a leader in action as well as thought. The Protestant canton of Berne had gained control of the larger part of The Pays de Vaud. In order that the people might gain a clear knowledge of evangelical principles arrangements were made for a public discussion at Lausanne (October, 1536). An invitation was extended to all the priests and inmates of the abbeys and convents in the conquered lands to attend the Disputation, with the privilege of the utmost freedom in discussing the ten evangelical theses prepared by Farel and Viret. In the invitation to this conference Farel wrote: "You may speak here as boldly as you please; our arguments are neither faggot, fire nor sword, prison nor torture; public executioners are not our doctors of divinity. \* \* \* Truth is strong enough to outweigh falsehood; if you have it, bring it forward." Only a fraction of the Romanists accepted this urgent invitation. The conference

opened October 1st, with a sermon preached by Farel in the Cathedral of Lausanne. The public discussion began on Monday and the great church was crowded to the doors by the people of the city and the surrounding country. The disputants took their assigned place in the middle aisle. Among them sat the representatives from Berne "distinguished by their black doublets and shoulder-knots faced with red, and by their broad-brimmed hats ornamented with great bunches of feathers—hats kept stiffly on their heads as befitting the representatives of such potent lords."

Farel and Viret were the Protestant orators. Calvin was present but had not purposed to speak. In the course of the discussion one of the Romanist defenders asserted that the Protestants were afraid to quote from the ancient Fathers, knowing that they were opposed to their doctrines. The young, and then but little known teacher from Geneva, rose to his feet and observed with sarcastic tone that those who professed to reverence the Fathers might profitably study their writings. Quoting from memory from Cyprian, Tertullian, St. Augustine, and others, he completely refuted the assertion of the Romanist speaker. He went out of the church a marked man. That address was soon a theme of interest in every Protestant home in Switzerland.

Calvin was now to prove his ability as a statesman. Matters were at loose ends in the civic life of Geneva and he set to work preparing a draft of needed reforms. It was accepted and became the basis of the ecclesiastical work accomplished by Calvin with the help of Farel and other associates. In this memorandum he urged the frequent celebration of the Lord's Supper; the congrega-

tional singing of the Psalms; the religious instruction of the young; and the lawful ordinance and duty of marriage. The articles received the general approval of the city Council and were in force until superseded by the ordinances adopted in the autumn of 1541. It must not be forgotten as we note the influence that Calvin exerted through municipal regulations that the free Swiss cities permitted to their Councils control over both large and petty affairs, a control that left little room for personal liberty and action. We quite agree with Professor Lindsay that in looking over the pages of the Swiss town records "the thought cannot help arising that the Civic Fathers, like some modern law-makers, were content to place stringent regulations on the statute books, and then, exhausted by their moral endeavor, had no energy left to put them in practice. But every now and then a righteous fit seized them, and maid servants were summoned before the Council for wearing silk aprons, or fathers for giving too luxurious wedding feasts, or citizens for working on a Church festival, or a mother for adorning her daughter too gaily for her marriage. The citizens of every mediæval town lived under a municipal discipline which we would pronounce to be vexatious and despotic."<sup>1</sup>

Only as we give careful attention to the conditions that Calvin had to accept in working out his plans can we understand the use he made of them. He was not only a diligent and profound student of the New Testament and the Early Fathers, but he had caught the spirit and purpose of the democracy they taught, and so became one of the world's great leaders in the removal of the rubbish

<sup>1</sup>History of the Reformation, Vol. II, p. 108.



and superstitions of medieval centuries and laying the foundations of republican institutions and forms of government in Church and State. A work that restored the rights of the people, denied the supremacy of hierarchical princes, and opened the way for the fulfillment of that unity of spirit and brotherhood for which our Lord prayed.

In the matter of excommunication of unworthy members Calvin "insisted that the secular power should enforce the censures of the Church." In taking this position, however mistaken it may seem to us, he was in accord with the leaders of the Reformation, although some of them, like Zwingli, did not believe the Church should exercise the right of excommunication. Calvin's ambition was to lay the foundations in Geneva of a theocracy. An ambition, however noble its aims and ideals, impossible of realization in a world where personal rights as well as personal obligations co-exist. The effort to impose a Confession of Faith upon the Genevians while approved by a majority of the Council met with opposition that was a source of growing irritation. This, with differences of opinion regarding discipline and methods of excommunication, aroused discontent that finally won over the Council to action that was in direct opposition to the views of Calvin and Farel. There were many in Geneva who still adhered to the Roman faith and others had no special interest in the Reformation movement further than as it was a means of freeing the city from the rule of the Bishop. The Anabaptist propaganda found adherents in this time of intellectual and religious ferment and they were glad to join the ranks of those who desired to destroy the work of the reformers and their



drastic plans for purifying the civic as well as spiritual life of the community. Another source of disturbance at this time originated in a trial which deposed Pierre Caroli, the chief pastor at Lausanne. Calvin stood by the side of those who condemned Caroli as a man of loose character and belief. In turn he brought charges against the Geneva pastors because "they would not enforce the Athanasian Creed and had not used the words 'Trinity' and 'Person' in the confession they had drawn up." The verdict was favorable to the Genevan divines and their accuser, after his return to France, rejoined the Roman Church.

More serious troubles were near at hand. The ritual which Farel had introduced and which Calvin vigorously supported, was the source of continued strife. Berne was seeking to strengthen its position as the controlling power among the Protestant cantons. While Geneva was independent it was bound by an alliance that admitted the Bernese into the city at all times and forbade the making of any treaty without their consent. The Council of Berne was the last court of appeal in Romance Switzerland and its leadership everywhere, but in Geneva, controlled ecclesiastical arrangements. The unrest that now divided the Genevans into different parties was taken advantage of to secure a closer alliance that would strengthen the political control of Berne over Geneva. This alliance would be advanced if uniformity in ecclesiastical usages could be secured. The Council of Berne called a Synod of the Protestant churches of Western Switzerland to consider this matter. The outcome of this, and a second meeting of the Synod, discloses that mischief makers were at work in underhanded ways. The

Genevan magistrates, without consulting Calvin or the other pastors of the city, resolved to introduce the Bernese forms of Church ceremonies. The following day their action was reported to Calvin and Farel with an admonition that it would not be wise to criticize this decision from their pulpit. Meanwhile invitations had been received to the Synod that was to meet at Lausanne (March 30, 1538,) intimating that if the Genevan pastors were not ready to accept the Berne proposals they would not be welcome. Farel and Calvin attended the Synod and acquiesced in the decision that adopted the Bernese usages. Under ordinary circumstances the change would have been made in a quiet and orderly way. But there were hot-tempered men in the Genevan Council who desired to make the position in which Farel and Calvin were placed as uncomfortable as possible. The situation reminds us of the experience of Jonathan Edwards, the great New England theologian, in the controversy that compelled him to resign his pastorate at Northampton. Truth telling is not popular with sin-loving pew holders any more than with the world outside.

The drama that brought future days of humiliation and regret to the Genevans, comes to its culminating scene. The Council demanded that the Bernese form of celebrating the Lord's Supper should be immediately introduced. If Farel and Calvin refused other ministers were to be engaged. One of the pastors of the city, the blind preacher Elie Coraut, had criticized the Council severely and had been forbidden to preach under threat of imprisonment. He gave no heed to the threat and was at once arrested and put in the city jail. Farel and Calvin demanded his release. The ears of the magistrates must

have burned as with fiery denunciation Farel reminded them that their official position and honors were due to Calvin and his own labors. But the tide of reaction was running with something of the swiftness with which the Rhone carries the waters of Lake Lemman on its way to the far off sea. The voices of the noble Christian messengers to whom the people of Geneva had so often listened with breathless interest, were silenced. In those days of undeserved humiliation Farel must have wondered if his "imprecation" that changed the plans of Calvin, was a Divine call, and Calvin must have pondered upon the mysteries of providence. With unseemly haste the faithful preachers were driven out of the city.

Calvin has left on record the story of these sad days. Street rowdies sang ribald and obscene songs under the windows of his house. They threatened to "throw him into the Rhone" and made the nights hideous by firing guns before his door,—“more than enough,” he says in a letter to a friend, “to astonish a poor scholar, timid as I am, and as I confess I have always been.”

Calvin and Farel at once laid their case before the Council of Berne and the Synod of Swiss Churches which met at Zurich April 28, 1538. Evidently the Bernese councillors, whose actions had aided in the fanatical outbreak at Geneva, were stricken with a sense of remorse and regret. They hastened to communicate with the Council at Geneva and urged them to undo their hasty action. Their reply disclosed the sinister influences that had gained control in its decisions.

From Berne the exiled ministers went on to Zurich to attend the Synod of Swiss Churches. They presented their case with “proud humility.” As to the matter of

ceremonial observance they were quite ready to act in harmony with the prevailing customs of the Reformed Churches. "But on the question of principle and on the rights of the Church set over against the State, they were firm."

The Synod sent a special message to the Council of Geneva and asked the deputies from Berne to use their best endeavors to secure the reinstatement of Farel and Calvin. The two pastors waited at the frontier while the deputies proceeded on their errand of reconciliation. The continued bitterness of feeling at Geneva is disclosed in the unanimous vote that repeated the sentence of exile and forbade the three pastors entering the Genevan territory. Calvin would gladly have sought seclusion and the opportunity for study that was his most delightful employment. But imperative calls came in many ways. The small, jealous minded burghers of Geneva, might vent their spleen against the man whose loyalty to truth had stirred their evil and selfish passions, but they could not rob him of the crown of fidelity and leadership that the Protestant leaders in every land where the Reformation was making progress, had placed upon him. Accepting an invitation to become the pastor of the French refugees who had found a home within the protecting walls of Strasburg, he found time to attend many influential conferences. At Worms and Regensburg he received a welcome from the Protestant German leaders such as had been given to no other representative from Switzerland. Luther was an admirer of the theological attainments of Calvin and the warm-hearted Melancthon numbered him among his best beloved friends.

The name of Calvin was again mentioned with the old-time affection and devotion in many of the homes of Geneva. The rabble that had insulted the great preacher was less in evidence but the sins they practiced had dragged the city into a condition of low immorality. The strict laws of the *Articles* were still enforced. Every householder was compelled to go to church and the Anabaptists and Romanists had a hard time. But matters were not moving along satisfactorily. Political complications threatened the independent existence of the city. Private correspondence was followed by overtures from the Council, asking Calvin to state the terms under which he would be willing to return to Geneva. The memory of those April nights and days of terror could not be easily effaced. But Calvin loved Geneva. The urgent appeals that came from the Council and old-time friends, who had never faltered in their attachment, overcame the distress with which he recalled the treatment that had sent him forth as an exile. Farel was ready to return and his sonorous voice again urged his more timorous friend to heed the call of duty.

"Calvin was in Geneva for the second time," says Professor Lindsay, "dragged there both times unwillingly, his dream of a quiet scholar's life completely shattered. The work that lay before him proved to be almost as hard as he had foreseen it would be. The common idea that from this second entry Calvin was master within the city, is quite erroneous. Fourteen years were spent in a hard struggle (1541-55); and if the remaining nine years of his life can be called his period of triumph over opponents (1555-64), it must be remembered that he was never able to see his ideas of an ecclesiastical organi-

zation wholly carried out in the city of his adoption. One must go to the Protestant Church of France to see Calvin's idea completely realized."<sup>1</sup>

During these years of unremitting toil in the face of increasing physical infirmities Calvin recodified the laws and constitution of Geneva and made it a welcome city of refuge to persecuted Protestants from every land. Drawn into many theological conflicts he sturdily defended the doctrinal system that he had wrought out in early manhood. The most memorable of these controversies was that which ended with the trial and burning of Servetus. "It can be justly charged against Calvin in this matter that he took the initiative in bringing on the trial of Servetus, that as his accuser he prosecuted the suit against him with undue severity, and that he approved the sentence which condemned Servetus to death. When, however it is remembered that the unanimous decision of the Swiss Churches and of the Swiss State governments was that Servetus deserved to die; that the general voice of Christendom was in favor of this; that even such a man as Melanchthon affirmed the justice of the sentence; that an eminent English divine of the next age should declare the process against him 'just and honorable,' and that only a few voices here and there at the time were raised against it, many will be ready to accept the judgment of Coleridge, that the death of Servetus was not 'Calvin's guilt especially, but the common opprobrium of all European Christendom.'"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>History of the Reformation, Vol. II, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup>Professors Alexander and Grieve. Article *Calvin*. Ency. Brittanica.



The men whom Calvin trained for the ministry caught his spirit and carried his principles and doctrines over the Continent and into England and France. His influence and counsel permeated every part of the religious, social, civic and business life of Geneva. To him, it is said, the city owed its prosperous trade in cloths and velvets. In the midst of all these varied duties his pen was busy to the very last. On the 16th of February, 1564, he preached his last sermon. During months of illness and severe suffering he attended to such duties as his strength would permit. Only a few days before his death he penned his last letter to his old co-laborer Farel, who hastened from Neuchatel for what proved a farewell visit. On the evening of May 27, 1564, he expired in the arms of his friend, Theodore Beza, in the fifty-fifth year of his age. "I have been a witness of him for sixteen years," said Beza, "and I think I am fully entitled to say that in this man there was exhibited to all an example of the life and death of the Christian, such as it will not be easy to deprecate, such as it will be difficult to emulate." Among the numberless tributes that, in the last four centuries, have been paid to the memory and character of Calvin one of the most remarkable was penned by his countryman, Ernest Renan. "It is surprising," says Renan, "that a man who appears to us in his life and writings so unsympathetic should have been the centre of an immense movement in his generation, and that this harsh and severe tone should have exercised so great an influence on the minds of his contemporaries. How was it, for example, that one of the most distinguished women of her time, Renée of France, in her court at Ferrara, surrounded by the flower of European wits, was captivated



by that stern master, and by him drawn into a course that must have been thickly strewn with thorns? This kind of austere seduction is exercised only by those who work with real conviction. Lacking that vivid, deep, sympathetic ardor which was one of the secrets of Luther's success, Calvin succeeded, in an age and in a country which called for a reaction towards Christianity, simply because he was the most Christian man of his generation."

John Calvin was preëminently the theologian of the Reformed Churches. His thought and doctrine is still a mighty factor of influence in the belief of a large section of the Church that holds to Christ as the Head. But it is the influence that went out from his teachings, as they have promoted the cause of civil liberty, that has placed every lover and supporter of democratic institutions under deepest obligation to the great Genevan reformer. He was the seed sower of principles that have made Protestantism what it is to-day; principles that have found leadership on the battlefields where the people have won their rights and withstood the arrogance and tyranny of civil and spiritual rulers; principles that lie at the foundation of the New Testament conception of Church and State and that alone can be the basis of a living, permanent unity.

In closing this story of the Reformation in Geneva we again recall the important part played by Farel. No one rejoiced more than he in the work and leadership of Calvin. Soon after he was recalled to Geneva with Calvin in 1541 he accepted an invitation to aid the cause of Reformation at Metz. There is a tradition that when he preached in the Dominican church his enemies tried to drown his voice by the ringing of bells. The result was

that a congregation of some three thousand gathered to hear his next sermon. The vigor and fervency of his preaching continued into old age. He was deeply affected by the death of Calvin. Revisiting Metz the following year he preached in his old pulpit a sermon that was filled with the fire and energy of early years. It proved a consuming flame and he died a few days later.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE REFORMATION IN FRANCE.

From the days in the Thirteenth Century when the Albigensians were exterminated by fire and sword the torch of spiritual light and dissent against the supremacy of Rome was handed on, not through revolution, but by the religious aspirations of the common people, led by choice spirits some of whom were born in palace homes. The story of Peter Waldo and his Waldensian followers has already been told.<sup>1</sup>

At the opening of the Sixteenth Century a remnant of the Waldensians survived in Southern France, and the memory of the Albigensian martyrs was kept alive in song and legend. The New Learning found an early welcome in France and a large number of Italian scholars and artists accepted the invitation that assured royal favor as they made it their home. In spite of the opposition of the Sorbonne, humanistic studies, as well as the study of Hebrew, were enthusiastically taken up by an increasing number of scholars. Jacques Lefèvre, a native of Picardy, has been called the father of the French Reformation. Born at Staples about 1455, after his graduation at the University of Paris, he remained as a teacher of philosophy and became a prolific writer. In 1509-12 he published commentaries on the Psalms and Pauline Epistles. "God will renovate the world, and you will be a witness to it," he once said to his pupil Farel, afterward the associate of Calvin at Geneva.

<sup>1</sup>See page 8.

In 1521 the Sorbonne condemned Luther as a heretic and blasphemer. Lefèvre came under their ban and in company with Farel, Roussel, and other priests, they found an asylum at Meaux. The protection of Bricconnet was soon withdrawn and Lefèvre fled to Strasburg. Later on he returned and became attached to the court of Margaret of Navarre, the sister of Francis I.

This remarkable woman holds a unique place in the story of the Reformation in France. While she did not withdraw from the old Church she became a devoted believer in Protestant tenets of faith. Her influence protected the persecuted Protestants and she was in full sympathy with her brother in his patronage of artists and men of letters. It is to the credit of Francis I. that he resented the action of the Sorbonne in its efforts to suppress heresy. Had not the fortune of battle gone against him at Pavia there would not have been cruel burnings at Paris and in the provinces. Both Francis and his sister suffered from the hate of those who sought to extirpate and destroy the Reformation movement in France. In this time of upheaval swift changes came in the life of all the Teutonic nations. Half of Germany and Switzerland had broken their allegiance to Rome. England (1534), Denmark (1526), Sweden (1527), had joined in this great revolt. The attitude of the French king was watched with deep solicitude. He chose a vacillating course. It has been truthfully said, Francis I. became "not the arbiter, but the prey of Europe." The soil of France was "the frightful theater of the battle of sects and nations. His dynasty perished in blood and mire."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Martin.

Francis deplored the tendencies in the Reformation that threatened religious divisions in his kingdom. As he saw the sentiments cherished by scholars and theologians opposed to Rome, taking root in the life of the common people he became alarmed. Now taking part in Catholic processions; now inviting Melanchthon to visit him at Paris; now lifting no word against the cruel burning of heretics, his conduct was that of a weak and shifty politician. We have already noted the part which Calvin had in his early life in the Protestant movement in France. As the days and years went by Calvinism came to leadership in the French churches; churches tested by the fires of cruel persecutions.

The Reformation made rapid headway especially in Southern France. Henry II., unlike his father, had no sympathy with Protestantism, but the progress of the reformed faith was not staid. It is estimated that in 1558 not less than four hundred thousand members worshipped in the two thousand churches organized in accord with the Presbyterian polity and doctrine established by Calvin at Geneva. Persecution proved a seed sowing of the truth. "The fanatics," says Martin, "and the politicians had thought to annihilate heresy by the number and atrocity of their punishments; they perceived with dismay that the hydra multiplied itself under their blows. They had succeeded in exalting to a degree unheard of before, all that there are of heroic powers in the human soul. For one martyr who disappeared in the flames, there presented themselves a hundred more; men, women, children, marched to their punishment singing Psalms and

hymns. Many expired in ecstasy, insensible to the refined cruelties of the savages who invented tortures to prolong their agony. More than one judge died of consternation and remorse. Others embraced the faith of those whom they sent to the scaffold. The executioner at Dijon was converted at the foot of the pyre. All the great phenomenon, in the most vast proportions, of the first days of Christianity, were seen to reappear. Most of the victims died with their eyes turned towards that New Jerusalem, that holy city of the Alps, where some had been to seek, whence others had received the Word of God. Not a preacher, not a missionary was condemned who did not salute Calvin from afar. They no more thought of reproaching Calvin for not following them into France than a soldier reproaches his general for not plunging into the thick of the fight."

When Francis II. came to the throne, in his minority, his ambitious mother, Catherine de Medici, hoped to hold the reins of power. This hope was early thwarted by her son's marriage with Mary Stuart, queen of Scotland. Through her influence over the weak and sickly king her uncles, the Constable Francis and the Cardinal of Lorraine, of the family of the Guises, came to power. They took the government out of the hands of the Constable de Montmorency and the princes of the blood who entered into alliance with the Calvinists and other parties opposed to the Guises. Dangers thickened about the Protestants when the death of Francis in 1560 again brought relief.

Charles II. was but a boy and came under the influence of his grandmother, Catherine de Medici, who now rejoiced in the power she had so long coveted. The Cal-

vinistic churches, under the guidance of their pastors, stood firm in their faith. Leaders of power joined their ranks. "Hence those wars of religion which were to hold the monarchy in check for many years and even force it to come to terms." Catherine enjoyed political intrigue and was indifferent to religious matters except as she feared "the royal authority might be endangered both by Calvinistic passions and Catholic violence." With the aid of her ministers she sought to quiet the conflicting parties by a truce of peace, but the storm had in it elements beyond their power to quell.

The Huguenot forces, led by Condé and Coligny, had secured liberty of conscience and early in 1561 they demanded liberty of worship. A "colloquy" held at Poissy in September, 1561, between the cardinals of Lorraine and Theodore Beza failed in its purpose and the Duke of Guise helped in a quarrel that broke out between the French Calvinists and German Lutherans. In spite of the efforts of the new order of the Jesuits, and other adverse circumstances, the edict promulgated January 17, 1562, enfranchised the Protestants. The Council of Trent rendered the edict of no avail. The party of the Guises had gained complete control over both Catherine and the King. The massacre of Vassy, in which two hundred Protestants perished, occurred March 1, 1562. It was the beginning of fratricidal strife in which ferocious passions had full play. The contestants sought the aid of their allies outside of France. English cavalry and German soldiers fought for Protestant ascendancy against Italian, Spanish and Swiss emissaries employed by the royal army. In Normandy, the valley of the Loire, and in Orleans these religious conflicts were fought with



relentless passion. The death of the foremost leaders of the Guises placed Catherine at the head of the Catholic party. The patched up peace of Amboise (1563) lasted for three years. The Guises then reopened the conflict against Coligny and the religious war was again in full force.

The treaty signed at St. Germain, August, 1570, conceded liberty of conscience and worship to the Protestants. Coligny was now supported by the Queen of Navarre and Charles IX. This favor increased the anger of Catherine de Medici. Following the failure of plans that sought the life of Coligny Catherine, with the help of the Guises, arranged the plot that culminated in the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve and the murder of Coligny.

It was a sad hour for the Protestants of France. The intrigues of court and camp and an excess of repressive measures brought some relief. The Peace of Monsieur (1576) again secured freedom of worship and the survivors of the massacre of 1572 and their fortified towns were given an equal representation in the parliaments. Taking another line of attack a Catholic League was formed under the leadership of the Guises, and efforts were made to destroy Calvinism through an imitation of the Protestant form of organization. This scheme of colossal hypocrisy led to complications that cover the pages of the history of France at this period with the cruel deeds of warring factions. The Protestants gained in strength, the League dissolved, and Henry IV. came to terms by the edict signed at Nantes, April 13, 1598. This compromise between the royal government and the Hu-

guenot government gave the Protestants rights and privileges beyond that enjoyed in any other country. "But if the accession of Henry IV. brought a comparative security to the Calvinists of France, this was the limit of its advantages to them. From a religious body, animated with the purpose to bring the whole country to the adoption of their principles, they were reduced to the condition of a defensive party, confined by metes and bounds, which it could not overpass; a party more and more separated from the Catholic population, and exposed, besides, to the evils consequent on keeping up a political and military organization. From this moment Protestantism in France ceased to grow."<sup>1</sup>

The horrible massacre of St. Bartholomew (1572), in which the great Huguenot leader Coligny lost his life, is the tragic hour in civil wars that did not cease until the Edict of Nantes (1598). Its revocation in 1685 was followed by the banishment of the Huguenots from France. Some of them found homes in England, and their silk and looms added to its wealth. Others crossed the Atlantic and in family groups settled in the vicinity of New York and at points on the seaboard as far south as Charleston. It has been truthfully asserted by a modern historian, recalling the persecutions and outrageous breaking of every law of liberty and treaty rights in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, "was committed one of the most flagrant political and religious blunders in the history of France, which in the course of a few years lost more than 400,000 of its inhabitants, men who, having to choose between their conscience and their country, endowed the

<sup>1</sup>Professor George P. Fisher. *The Reformation*, p. 244.

nations which received them with their heriosm, their courage and their ability.”<sup>1</sup>

The recent rehabilitation and growth of French Protestantism is a matter of profound gratitude throughout the world. In 1802 it numbered scarcely 100 pastors. To-day it has over 900 churches and 180 presbyteries. In the war that has tested France as by fire these churches have suffered beyond measure. The United States, through the Federal Council of the Churches, has given welcome aid in this hour of sore distress.

<sup>1</sup>Peaux. Article *Huguenots*. Ency. Brittanica. Eleventh edition.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE REFORMATION IN THE NETHERLANDS.

The Netherlands were the last of the European powers to revolt from Rome, but within their national life the forces had long been gathering strength for the conflict that fills one of the great pages of history; a conflict that finally secured their religious and civil freedom and made the Netherlands a foremost champion of Protestant principles.

Originally a part of the Burgundian provinces, the Netherlands came to the Spanish crown by the marriage alliance of the mother of Charles V. The seventeen provinces of the Duchy of Burgundy were nearly co-extensive with the territory that now includes Holland and Belgium. The skill and intelligence of her thrifty artisans, farmers, and burghers, had made the entire country a veritable beehive of prosperous industry. Antwerp was the chief among the three hundred and fifty cities of the Low Countries. Science and letters flourished. "It was their boast that common laborers, even the fishermen who dwelt in the huts of Friesland, could read and write, and discuss the interpretation of Scripture. Local government existed to a remarkable extent throughout the seventeen provinces. Each had its own chartered rights, privileges, and immunities, and its immemorial customs, which the sovereign was bound to keep inviolate. The people loved their freedom."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Professor George P. Fisher. *The Reformation*, p. 245.

The doctrines and reforms promulgated by Luther found large welcome in the Netherlands. They were by no means new to this liberty-loving people. "Nor did the Rhine from Germany, or the Meuse from France," says the Jesuit historian Strada, "send more water into the Low Countries than by the one the contagion of Luther, by the other of Calvin, was imported into the same Belgic provinces."

Charles established the Inquisition<sup>1</sup> in the Low Countries in 1522. Its first victim was Cornelius Grapheus, town clerk of Antwerp and a friend of Erasmus. He suffered imprisonment and banishment. The first martyrs of the Reformation were two Augustinian monks, Henry Voes and John Esch. They died in the triumph of faith. On their way to the stake (Antwerp, July 31, 1523,) "they cried with a loud voice that they were Christians." As the flames swept about them they recited the Creed and "after that the hymn *Te Deum laudamus*, which each of them sang verse by verse alternately until the flames deprived them both of voice and life."<sup>2</sup>

When Luther learned of the martyrdom of these Netherland monks—members of the order to which he belonged—he wrote a message of condolence and hope to the persecuted Christians of the Low Countries, and his heart broke forth in the inspiring strains of his hymn, *A New Song of the two Martyrs of Christ Burnt at Brus-*

<sup>1</sup>This terrible instrument of persecution was founded by Innocent III. in 1215. Its horrors constitute one of the darkest, saddest, pages in all history. "The prisoners of the Inquisition were never confronted by witnesses, but were imprisoned and tortured to make them confess and recant their errors."

<sup>2</sup>Brandt. *The History of the Reformation*, Vol. I, p. 49.

*sels*. One of its stanzas has been translated in these words:

“Quiet their ashes will not lie;  
But scattered far and near,  
Stream, dungeon, bolt, and grave defy,  
Their foeman’s shame and fear.  
Those whom alive the tyrant’s wrongs  
To silence could subdue,  
He must, when dead, let sing the songs  
Which in all languages and tongues,  
Resound the wide world through.”

Proclamation after proclamation was issued by Charles condemning heresy and forbidding the printing of books that were not approved by the censors. The holding of meetings to “read or preach about the Gospel or other holy writings in Latin, Flemish or Walloon, was forbidden.” These edicts had for their purpose the suppression of the teaching of Lutheran doctrines. Anabaptists were looked after in other ways.

Circumstances held somewhat in abeyance the persecution of heretics during the reign of Charles V. His aunt, Margaret of Austria, who was regent till 1530, was not eager to carry out her nephew’s edicts and his sister Mary, who ruled from 1530 until Charles’ abdication in 1555, was even suspected in early life of being a Lutheran convert. There is little doubt but that she sympathized for a time with the views of her sister, the Queen of Denmark, who had joined the Lutheran Church. After entering on the duties of the Regency she appears to have become thoroughly imbued with the purposes and plans

of her brother. His reiterated and vindictive commands brought a multitude of victims to the stake. The fanatical outbreak under the leadership of John Boccold of Leyden, was made an excuse also for exterminating the followers of Luther. "Thousands and tens of thousands of virtuous, well disposed men and women, who had as little sympathy with anabaptistical as with Roman depravity, were butchered in cold blood, under the sanguinary rule of Charles, in the Netherlands. In 1533 Queen Dowager Mary of Hungary, sister of the Emperor, Regent of the provinces, the 'Christian widow' admired by Erasmus, wrote to her brother that 'in her opinion all heretics, whether repentant or not, should be prosecuted with such severity as that error might be, at once, extinguished, care being only taken that the provinces were not entirely depopulated.' With this humane limitation, the 'Christian widow' cheerfully set herself to superintend as foul and wholesale a system of murder as was ever organized. In 1535 an imperial edict was issued at Brussels, condemning all heretics to death; repentant males to be executed with the sword; repentant females to be buried alive; the obstinate, of both sexes, to be burned. This and similar edicts were the law of the land for twenty years, and rigidly enforced. Imperial and papal persecution continued its deadly work with such diligence as to make it doubtful whether the limits set by the Regent Mary might not be overstepped. In the midst of the carnage the Emperor sent for his son Philip, that he might receive the fealty of the Netherlands as their future lord and master. Contemporaneously a new edict was published at Brussels (April 29, 1549,) confirming and reënacting all previous decrees in their most severe



provisions. Thus stood religious matters in the Netherlands at the epoch of the imperial abdication."<sup>1</sup>

At the time when Charles V. dropped the reins of imperial power he was a broken, decrepit, disappointed man of fifty-five years. His son, Philip the Second, was twenty-eight years old. The scene in the great hall of the palace of Brussels (October 25, 1555,) when Charles V. abdicated his throne in favor of his son, is one that historians have painted in vivid colors. Supported by a crutch and with one hand resting upon a young prince of the realm, William of Orange, he made the notable address in which under the most spectacular surroundings he transferred his royal prerogatives to Philip II, "whose single will was, for the future, to shape the fortunes of every individual then present of many millions more in Europe, America, and at the ends of the earth, and of countless millions yet unborn."<sup>2</sup>

Charles in the retirement of the cloister did not change in character. Brooding over his failure to crush the Reformation he cherished an implacable hatred of its great leader. To the last he expressed his regret that he had allowed Luther to escape out of his hands at the Diet of Worms. Notwithstanding his cruel persecution of the Lutherans, and others of the Reformed faith, the Netherlands never forgot that he was of blood akin to their own. Philip had been born in Spain. They looked upon him as a foreigner and from the beginning of his reign his cold, cruel nature repelled his subjects in the Low Country at every point. His marriage with the

<sup>1</sup>Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Queen of England (July 25, 1554,) was fraught with far-reaching influences that, out of the welter of blood and heroic endurance that marked the birth of the Dutch Republic, advanced in ways that he little imagined the work of Reformation and the victories of Protestant faith.

The first four years of his reign Philip II. spent in the Netherlands. He sought to carry out his father's policies. The feeling of opposition to the burdensome exactions that had long oppressed the nation more and more found expression through the States General. Philip detested the liberty-loving and prosperous Netherlands and they detested him. In 1559 he left the country never to return. Margaret of Parma, his half-sister, was appointed Regent. She followed the advice of three Councils that were presided over by three men chosen by Philip. The Council of State virtually controlled affairs and this Council was guided by the three presidents: the Bishop of Arras (Cardinal de Granvelle); the Baron de Barlaymont, and Virgilius van Aytta; and two Netherland nobles, Lamoral, Count of Egmont, and William Prince of Orange. These nobles seldom attended the sessions of the Council. From his room in the Escorial in Madrid Philip kept his hands, with indomitable industry, upon the strings that controlled the multiplied activities that sought to destroy heresy and heretics. The Reformation staid not in its course. Political blunders still further aroused feeling on the part of the nobility and gradually the Prince of Orange and Count Egmont became the leaders in a growing revolt against Spanish rule. The way in which they had been virtually ignored as members of the Council gave these men an excuse for resigning

their office. The growing opposition was founded both on political and religious grounds and aggravated by Philip's failure to keep his promise in withdrawing the Spanish troops from the country. William of Orange now comes to the front as the champion of the people whose fury waxed to white heat. Not only were the hated Spanish soldiers billeted upon them but the inquisitorial courts in pushing their wretched work had violated many of the charters of the provinces. Matters came to a head in the sending of Count Egmont to Madrid. The duplicity of Philip was finally illustrated. He met the Count with so pleasant a welcome that when he started homeward he supposed his appeals had secured a favorable response. When the sealed letter which he bore to the Council was opened he discovered how cruelly he had been deceived.

A dispatch from the Escorial later on (November 5, 1565,) ordered the immediate enforcement of the Decrees of the Council of Trent in every part of the provinces. The Netherlands rose in arms. The official leaders of the towns declared that they would resign their places before they would execute these decrees. The wheels of busy industries were idle. The main object of thought and action was to discover the path of deliverance from Spanish oppression and papal tyranny. Pamphlets aflame with passionate appeals were scattered broadcast through the provinces. "We are ready to die for the Gospel," they said, "but we read therein, 'Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's and unto God the things which are God's.' We thank God that even our enemies are constrained to bear witness to our piety and innocence, for it is a common saying: 'He does not swear, for he is a

Protestant. He is not an immoral man or a drunkard, for he belongs to the new sect'; yet we are subjected to every kind of punishment that can be invented to torment us."

The famous *Compromise* issued early in the year 1566 brings upon the stage leaders whose names are among the founders of the Dutch Republic and the Reformed faith. Foremost among them is Francis Junius, pastor of a congregation of Huguenots who met in secret at Antwerp. The son of a noble French family, he had studied at Geneva. He was noted alike for his eloquence and his courage. Daring even to proclaim Evangelical doctrines in a room that at the very moment looked out upon the market-place where heretics were burning, it is little wonder that his message found response in the hearts of men who then and there resolved that they would form a league against "the barbarous and violent inquisition." A like resolve was taken about this time by other influential men and not long after the *Compromise*, probably drafted by the accomplished Sainte Aldegonde, was circulated for signatures. Among the more than two thousand names appended to this document were not only Lutheran but Calvinist and Roman Catholic nobles. Unfortunately this movement fell into the hands of a group of the younger nobility who disgraced both themselves and the cause they represented by riotous excesses. The Prince of Orange held aloof from the secret gatherings of this league and its turbulent spirit. But the *Compromise* set forth grievances and made an appeal that had the full approval of Orange and other great nobles.

While Margaret of Parma was bitterly bewailing the conditions stirred up by the inquisitorial decree of her

brother, Philip was busy in preparation for the contest he knew could not long be delayed. It was a time of deep distress in the Netherlands. Trade had almost ceased; grass was growing in the once busy streets of her chief cities; large numbers were finding refuge from persecution in Protestant England, and famine was causing acute suffering. It was estimated that at least fifty thousand victims had been executed under the decrees of Philip. In this hour of distress the calm but noble form of William, Prince of Orange, comes to the front. Rebuking turbulent spirits, he gave counsel and encouragement to his fellow nobles and also to those who with patriotic zeal sought to secure the rights that the King of Spain was trampling upon. Philip thought to stay the storm by his old-time policy of duplicity. He sent messages to Margaret that promised relief. Refugees returned from England, Germany, France, and Switzerland. Religious services were held in the fields, where armed men surrounded as sentinel guards, the congregations that again sang in Flemish, Dutch and French the hymns and Psalms they loved so well and that had been upon the lips of beloved friends and companions as they had gone to their martyr's death. The Spanish soldiers feared to molest these devoted worshipers. Emboldened, the reformers marched through the streets singing their hymns of praise. Great conferences were held in which men like Louis of Nassau took part. These demonstrations of popular feeling impressed even Philip and he sent word in the summer of 1566 that he was about to withdraw the papal Inquisition from the Netherlands and grant a large measure of tolerance. He declined, however, to allow the States General to be summoned.

The astute Prince of Orange had long fathomed the double dealing treacherous character of Philip. His promises had little worth in his estimation. Again the great Protestant leader, and the cause he advocated, had to suffer sadly from the mob turbulence that was incited by the social and economic distress caused by the persecutions of the Inquisition. The sacking of the great cathedral of Antwerp was the culmination of this mad outbreak of iconoclastic fury. The effects of this disastrous storm of angry and ill advised conflict was far-reaching in its influence. The more liberal Roman Catholics were alienated and the cleavage began that separated the Protestants of the North from the Romanists of the South. Margaret was enraged and as far as possible withdrew the privileges that had been granted to the Reformed faith.

Having done all that lay in his power to stay the tide of anarchy William of Orange retired to his ancestral home at Dillenburg. Here he watched for the path in which Philip would disclose his duplicity. He had not long to wait. Word came that the Duke of Alva with a strong force of veteran Spanish soldiers were making their way over the Alps and through France. When he arrived at Brussels he presented credentials that virtually made him dictator. The Counts Egmont and Hoorn, with many others, were arrested. Alva at once created a judicial chamber popularly known as *The Bloody Tribunal*, that paid no attention to the Council of State and overruled in its decisions every other court in the Netherlands. The work of this horrible *Council of Tumults* was almost inconceivable in its cruelty and injustice. A contemporary historian says: "The gallows, the wheel, stakes, trees along the highways were laden with carcasses or



limbs of those who had been hanged, beheaded, or roasted; so that the air which God made for respiration of the living, was now become the common grave or habitation of the dead. Every day produced fresh objects of pity and of mourning, and the noise of the bloody passing-bell was continually heard, which by the martyrdom of this man's cousin and the other's brother or friend, rang dismal peals in the hearts of the survivors."<sup>1</sup>

The Prince of Orange was outlawed and his property confiscated. The "lion" within him was aroused and he bent every energy to enlist an army and face the Spanish forces in the Netherlands. His brother, John of Nassau, aided him even to the pledging of his estate. Defeat after defeat in the conflict with the trained soldiers of Alva did not dishearten or dismay the Prince. "With God's help," he wrote to his brother Louis, "I am determined to go on." The days brought no relief and difficulties thickened. Pursued by creditors, to meet whose claims he had sold his plate and jewels, in fear of assassination, and burdened with domestic troubles, the man who was finally to achieve a place among the immortal characters of history, wandered from place to place. He was literally homeless. But the barbarities of Alva became unendurable and the indefatigable efforts of William and his brother were finally crowned with success. The revolt that started with the seizure of the seaport of Flushing in 1572 spread through Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, and Friesland. The Prince of Orange was acclaimed on every side. After varying fortunes in arms he settled at Delft and thenceforth became the leader of the Holland-

<sup>1</sup>Brandt. *History of Reformation*, p. 261.



ers and Zealanders in the struggle that founded the Dutch Republic.

"In order to identify himself more closely with the cause for which he was fighting, Orange had, on October 23, 1573, made a public confession of the Calvinist religion. But he was never a bigot in religious matters. The three conditions which he laid down as the irreducible minimum on which negotiations could be based, and from which he never departed, were (1) freedom of worship and liberty to preach the Gospel according to the Word of God; (2) the restoration and maintenance of all the ancient charters, privileges and liberties of the land; (3) the withdrawal of all Spaniards and other foreigners from all posts and employments, civil and military. On these points he was inflexible, but he was a thoroughly moderate man. He hated religious tyranny whether it were exercised by Papist or Calvinist and his political aims were not self-seeking. His object was to prevent the liberties of the Netherlands from being trampled under foot by a foreign despotism, and he did not counsel the provinces to abjure their allegiance to Philip until he found the Spanish monarch was intractable. But when the abjuration became a necessity he sought to find in Elizabeth of England or the Duke of Anjou, a sovereign possessing sufficient resources to protect the land from the Spaniard."<sup>1</sup>

In the spring of 1576 a union was consummated between Holland and Zeeland by which William was given supreme authority as *ad interim* ruler. Southern Nether-

<sup>1</sup>George Edmunson. Article *William of Orange*. Ency. Britannica. Eleventh edition.

lands, this same year, suffering from the excesses of Spanish soldiers, was ripe for revolt. The so-called "Spanish Fury" on the morning of November 5th (1576), found the city of Antwerp a scene of desolation and death. "Of all the deeds of darkness yet compassed in the Netherlands, this was the worst. The city which had been a world of wealth and splendor was changed to a charnel-house, and from that hour its commercial prosperity was blasted."<sup>1</sup>

The outcome of this burst of Spanish hate was the adoption of the "Pacification of Ghent," by which, under the leadership of the Prince of Orange, the entire seventeen provinces formed a league to drive the hired soldiers of Philip from the Netherlands. In January (1577), the southern provinces supplemented this action by a pledge to maintain the Roman Catholic religion and continue their allegiance to the authority of the King. This action was assented to by William and he himself acted as a stadtholder under the King's commission. September 23d was a triumph hour for the great leader of the Netherlands. In the procession that filled the streets of Brussels Catholics and Protestants marched side by side. This hour of triumph was soon shadowed by the intrigues of ambitious men who sought to gain the place of leadership. Philip discovered in Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma, whom he appointed governor general, a foeman whose ability put William of Orange to the severest test. Stirring up the jealousy of the Catholic nobles of the South, Farnese won their adherence. From the time of the signing of the "Union of Utrecht" (January 29, 1579),

<sup>1</sup>Motley. *The Rise of the Dutch Republic.*

Northern and Southern Netherlands opened separate chapters in history.

In 1581 Philip published the ban that denounced the Prince of Orange as a traitor and outlaw. This action drew from the pen of William the *Apology* that arraigned Philip for his horrible treatment of his Netherland subjects and gave an outline of his own career. The Prince at this juncture sought the aid of France and proposed to make the Duke of Anjou King of the United Provinces. This suggestion did not meet the approval of Holland and Zeeland. Contrary to his wish he finally yielded to their request to accept their countship. Two days later (July 26, 1581,) Brabant, Flanders, Utrecht, Gelderland, Holland, and Zeeland in council at the Hague, abjured the sovereignty of Philip and agreed to accept the kingship of Anjou, who was inaugurated as Duke of Brabant at Antwerp, February 19, 1582. A few days later William nearly lost his life by the shot of an assassin. But his work was not yet done. Anjou proved a weak and treacherous leader. The fiasco, known as the "French Fury," by which he hoped to strengthen his royal authority, brought upon him a contempt in which, for a time, William innocently suffered. In the spring of 1583 the Prince married the widowed daughter of Coligny, the great Huguenot leader, and made his permanent home at Delft. As the beloved and trusted head of his loyal Hollanders and Zeelanders he lived a quiet unostentatious life until his enemies compassed their long planned purpose in his assassination, July 9, 1584.

"Of his moral qualities," says Motley, "the most prominent was his piety. He was more than anything else a religious man. From his trust in God he ever derived

support and consolation in the darkest hours. Implicitly relying upon Almighty wisdom and goodness, he looked danger in the face with a constant smile, and endured incessant labors and trials with a serenity which seemed more than human. While, however, his soul was full of piety, it was tolerant of error. Sincerely and deliberately himself a convert to the Reformed Church, he was ready to extend freedom of worship to Catholics on the one hand, and to Anabaptists on the other, for no man ever felt more keenly than he, that the reformer who becomes in his turn a bigot is doubly odious."

The sufferings of those who held to the Reformed faith in these years, in which the foundations of the Dutch Republic were laid, forms a sad but heroic chapter of the Protestant Reformation. During the period in which the Spanish Fury raged in the streets of Antwerp more victims were massacred than on the night of St. Bartholomew. The sufferings of the burghers of Ghent who were loyal to Christ and the Reformed faith in the days when the Duke of Parma reduced the once proud and wealthy city to a condition of poverty and anarchy, revealed a heroic steadfastness of character that is a heritage both of blood and faith that has been a powerful factor of influence in the political and religious life of both England and the United States. The memorable treaty of union, published January 29, 1579, from the town-house of Utrecht, may well stand by the Declaration of Independence signed at Philadelphia, July 4, 1776, and the portraits of Washington and William, Prince of Orange, are worthy to hang side by side in the gallery of history.

While the storm of persecution was raging about them the Netherlanders organized churches and history makes

record of a synod held in 1563 in which the delegates bound themselves in a compact of doctrine and discipline. The first preachers of the Reformation in the Low Countries were Lutherans, and they found followers especially among the lesser nobility and the wealthy burghers. The views of Zwingli were favored by many. The Southern provinces, where French was spoken, came under the influence of the teachers trained by Calvin at Geneva. In time Lutheranism and Zwinglianism gave place in the Netherlands to Calvinistic doctrine and discipline. Church organization as it developed was marked by two peculiarities. "The *consistory* or kirk session is the court which rules the individual congregation in Holland as in all other Presbyterian lands; but in the Dutch Church all Church members are regarded as one congregation; the ministers are the pastors of the city, preaching in turn in all its buildings set apart for public worship."<sup>1</sup> The whole city constitutes one consistory. The civil constitution compelled each province to regulate its own ecclesiastical affairs, and this made it difficult to arrange for a National Synod. The creedal statement known as the Belgic Confession was approved at Dordrecht in 1572, and the Heidelberg Catechism was adopted for the religious instruction of the young. The Reformed Church in Holland that in the Seventeenth Century nourished names famous in Church and State, gave to the United States a stream of life that blending with the Puritan emigration laid the foundations of the great Republic: a Republic that had as its forerunner the Dutch Republic, whose leading founder was William, Prince of Orange, the forerunner of Washington.

<sup>1</sup>Lindsay. *History of the Reformation*, Vol. II, p. 272.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE HOME LIFE OF LUTHER, CALVIN, ZWINGLI, AND KNOX.

Few leaders in the making of history stand more fully in the limelight of contemporary narrative than Martin Luther. His life, not only in its public labors, but in the intimacy of the home and his daily intercourse with his friends, is an open book. Luther was many sided in his genius and exceedingly human. The blood that ran with tempestuous force through his veins nourished a temperament that in its creative power made him the peerless pulpit orator and the fiery pamphleteer. His "Table Talk," preserved by admiring friends, discloses a racy command of language that enabled him to clothe his suggestive everyday conversation with a wealth of helpful illustration. He loved the out of door world. The bouquet of flowers which he held in his hand when in disputation with Eck, at Leipsic, was not an affectation, but a simple expression of his enjoyment of the fragrance and beauty of the flowers that always made him a garden lover and cultivator. He knew the birds and their songs stirred the melody that dwelt so richly in his nature. Music, from the years when his boyish voice gladdened the Cotta home at Erfurt, was an abiding joy and solace. The flute of Luther brought rest in the midst of nerve-racking tasks. If sometimes his over-wrought strength gave way to outbursts of wrath and temper we may be sure that after the storm of his indignation against the vindictive persecution and cruel accusations of enemies



had past, the flute and guitar that was near at hand would bring peace into his troubled heart by strains of melody akin to those welling out of the throat of some songster of the field as the sun breaks through the clouds whose lightnings and thunder are spent. The great reformer bore testimony in praise of the art of music, saying: "Music is the best cordial to a person in sadness; it soothes, quickens and refreshes the heart."

Luther was especially happy and fortunate in his home life. His marriage in middle life to Katharina von Bora was an ideal union in many ways. A strong, well-balanced character, in full accord with the work and mission of her husband, with womanly devotion she ministered to a domestic life that became the center of power and influence as the place where Luther welcomed the friends and guests that gathered about his table from day to day. The Augustinian cloister, where Luther had lived from the time he came to Wittenberg, was given to him by the Elector Friedrich as a wedding gift. It was a roomy building and at one time accommodated forty monks. This splendid gift was deeded to Luther and his wife jointly. The most famous of its many rooms was that where the family gathered for their meals. About this table Luther delighted to welcome his friends. It was a place of high thinking and very generous living. His enemies laid much stress upon the personal habits and generous provision of this ample board. That it was ample we cannot doubt. That more beer was drank than was necessary we have reason to believe, but the stories of intemperance circulated by those who hated the reformer were lies of the vilest kind. The home life of Luther was a type of the best domestic life of his times.



The "Table Talk," that in its rich suggestiveness reveals his super-abundant genius in every theme his thought illuminated, discloses also the crass habits of the Sixteenth Century. Language was a medium used in a rough, open way that falls harshly at times upon ears accustomed to the usages of society in the Twentieth Century.

Besides his five children Luther and his wife cared for eleven of his orphaned nephews and nieces. "This reprimander of Popes and Kings," says Koepchen, "was loved by the children, and the great champion was as playful among them as though he were himself again a child. He could fight fiercely all day for his cause and in the evening take his lute, gaze at the stars, sing psalms and muse upon the clouds, the fields, the flowers, the birds, dissolved in melody and devotion."

The ban of the Diet of Worms made Luther legally an outlaw. When absent from his Wittenberg home his friends were in constant fear that harm might come to him through the machination of enemies who sought to destroy him. At the time of the famous Diet at Augsburg, Luther was a guest of the Elector at his castle in Coburg. While waiting daily for tidings from Augsburg and keeping in close touch with Melanchthon, and other friends, he found time to write home letters that bear testimony to his affectionate nature and the tender ties that bound him to his family. To help him in his avowed homesickness, at this time, his wife engaged Lucas Cranach to paint a portrait of their baby daughter Magdalena and sent it to Coburg. Luther hung the picture where he could see it as he sat at his writing table. He tells us "that the sweet little face looking down upon

him gave him courage during his dreary months of waiting." A charming letter written in these days to his youngest son is still preserved. The death of Magdalena in her thirteenth year was a heart-breaking sorrow. She fell asleep in her father's arms. "As they laid her in the coffin he said, 'Darling Lena, it is well with you. You will rise and shine like a star, yea like the sun. \* \* \* I am happy in spirit but the flesh is sorrowful and will not be content; the parting grieves me beyond measure. It is strange that she is certainly in peace and happy and yet I so sorrowful. \* \* \* I have sent a saint to heaven.'"<sup>1</sup>

The herculean labors of Luther in early manhood impaired his strong constitution and brought upon him physical disabilities that were the source at times of great depression of spirit and much suffering. He has left testimony as to the loving care and devotion that in his home ministered to his every want. The world owes much to the noble wife and mother whose thrift and management made possible the home life and hospitality of the great reformer.

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The married life of John Calvin discloses a temperament utterly unlike that of Luther. Outwardly undemonstrative the great Genevan reformer and theologian was by no means lacking in warmth of feeling. Cool and logical in all the processes of his nature there were hidden resources of affection that bound him in close ties to the friends who shared his intimacy. No man could have been blessed with such loyalty of love, as well as admiration, on the part of a host of friends, if his blood had

<sup>1</sup>*Conversations with Luther*, p. 47.

run cold and selfish. Calvin was essentially a scholar. His study was a place of unremitting toil and he begrudged any pleasures that kept him from the tasks that were to him the source of his highest joy.

Like Luther, Calvin had come to middle life when he decided to seek a helpmeet to share his home. Evidently the great leader of affairs in Geneva was well aware that there were those ready to take this place. In a characteristic way he took up the matter in a business-like fashion.

In a letter to his friend Farel, under date of May, 1539, he writes: "I am not of that insane class of lovers who, once captivated by beauty, kiss even its faults. The only comeliness that attracts me is this: that she be modest, complaisant, unostentatious, thrifty, patient, and likely to be careful of my health."

In the following year (1540) negotiations were opened with the friends of a nobly born young woman of considerable wealth. These endowments did not appeal to Calvin and nothing came of the matter. His brother Antoine was the go-between in considering another lady "who, if she answers to her reputation, would bring dowry enough without any money." Final inquiries in this case were unsatisfactory. The wife whom he chose and to whom he was probably married in the summer of 1540, "with the aid and advice of Bucer," was "a grave and honorable woman," Idelette de Bure, widow of Jean Stordeur of Liege, whom Calvin had converted from Anabaptist views.

This marriage gave Calvin a home life for a few years that was the source of much joy and blessing even under the shadow of the prolonged illness of his estimable wife. His only child, Jaques, born July 28, 1542, lived but a

few days, and the wife and mother never regained her health. After her death (March 29, 1549,) Calvin wrote these lines to his friend Viret: "I have been bereaved of the best companion of my life, who, if our lot had been harsher would have been not only the willing sharer of exile and poverty, but even of death. While she lived, she was a faithful helper of my ministry. From her I never experienced the slightest hindrance."

Calvin in his habits led a sedentary and semi-invalid life. In spite, however, of physical hindrances he was an unceasing and tireless worker. His active brain toiled on when the body was suffering from severe pain. A single meal was his only daily repast and his exercise was confined to short walks and sometimes a game of quoits in his garden, or "clef" on the table in his living rooms.

In the days of extreme weakness that preceded his last illness he clung with increasing affection to his friends. Beza "was to him as a son in his last days," and Farel came from Basel to cheer the great reformer whom he had providentially aided in bringing him to his life-work in Geneva.

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Zwingli was married to Anna Reinhard, widow of Hans Meyer von Knonau, in 1524. This happy union was attended in its beginning with both romance and some difficulties. When Zwingli came to Zurich in 1519 he first met the beautiful widow who five years later became his wife. Her son, a promising lad, was a member of his Church school. There is a tradition that the visits of the popular young preacher to the home of his fair parishioner were so frequent that it became a matter of pleasant town gossip. The marriage was somewhat de-

layed by troubles in connection with the adjustment of the inheritance of her children. Both to them and the mother the union with the great Swiss preacher and reformer was one of unalloyed happiness.

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John Knox was twice married. His first wife was Marjory Bowes. During the years spent in Geneva two sons were born (1557-1558). Two years later, in 1560, the happy home was suddenly shadowed by the death of the devoted wife and mother whose beautiful Christian character was delineated by Calvin in an eloquent tribute to her memory. Eight days after the death of their father the two sons matriculated at the University of Cambridge.

In 1564 Knox married Margaret, daughter of Andrew, Lord Stewart of Ochiltru, a distant connection of the royal house. There was a great disparity in their age. Knox was fifty-nine; his bride sixteen. The marriage proved a happy one and three daughters were born in the home that gave its sheltering ministry of love in the years that closed the stormy public life of the great Scotch leader and reformer.

## CHAPTER X.

### HISTORICAL RELATION OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE REFORMATION.

Protestantism laid the foundations of the American Republic. This statement is substantiated by the facts of history. Columbus never set foot on the soil now covered by the United States. It was John Cabot, captain of an English vessel, who first explored our Atlantic seaboard. With the exception of Maryland, men of Protestant affiliation were the founders of the thirteen colonies that formed the Union that within a century and a half has expanded into a nation the wealthiest in the world and having a population of over one hundred millions. The part played by the Reformation in this history is one in which all of the denominational Bodies in the fellowship of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, have a share.<sup>1</sup>

The story of the Reformation, as it is woven into the history of the United States, is one of romantic interest. It was in the New World that the work begun by Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Knox, and other great Protestant leaders, was to come to its largest fulfillment as a seed sowing of democratic principles and the founder of republican institutions. As early as 1562 a company of Huguenots attempted to plant a colony at what is now Port Royal, in South Carolina. It was the beginning of an emigration

<sup>1</sup>Sanford's *Origin and History of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America*, pp. 317-389.

that the Protestant French leader, Admiral Coligny, hoped might establish a great commonwealth. Philip II. followed this heroic band with the hate that kept alive the fires of the Inquisition in Europe and the massacre of the colonists at St. Augustine (1565) closed the opening chapter of Protestant emigration to the Atlantic seaboard.

In the years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth a remarkable group of men became sea rovers and helpers in the founding of English colonies in America. The names of Drake, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, and Sir Walter Raleigh, head a list of navigators who assisted in many ways to make England the dominant power in the founding of the colonies.

"It cannot be denied," says Daniel Webster, "that with America and in America a new era commences in human affairs." In that era Protestant Christianity was to act the leading part. The English settlement at Jamestown in 1607 antedates by seven years (1614) the unfurling of the flag of the Dutch Republic at the southern extremity of Manhattan Island. New Netherlands was the name first given to the spot upon which the commercial metropolis of the New World has been built. There is a bell in the city of New York that may well be placed in a historic niche by the side of the liberty bell in Independence Hall in Philadelphia. It hangs in the steeple of the Reformed (Dutch) church at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Twenty-ninth Street. Cast in Holland in Reformation days it still calls the hour of Sabbath worship.

During the half century that the Dutch held possession of Manhattan Island and the Hudson River Valley, the Reformed Church laid deep the foundations of its Protestant faith and doctrine. New Amsterdam, before it be-



came New York, won a heritage of history and ancestry that is still one of the proudest possessions of the city, and the story of the Rise of the Dutch Republic and the Reformed Church of the Netherlands is vitally related to the history of the United States.

The landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, on the New England coast in 1620, brought to our shores the little company of Separatists who, leaving their humble English homes, first found refuge in Holland before they crossed the stormy Atlantic. Ten years later began the great Puritan emigration that gave to the New World the "sifted wheat" of the Protestant life of England. The foremost place filled by the leaders of this emigration, as well as the rank and file, in the history of Church and State in the United States is unquestioned.

American Congregationalism and the great Baptist fellowship came to their birth through this Puritan life. Roger Williams, a graduate of Oxford University, was an ordained minister of the Church of England at the time he landed in Boston and settled at Salem (1631). Embracing Baptist views, and rejecting all union between Church and State he became the founder of Rhode Island and the leader in promulgating Baptist principles and founding churches now numbering several millions of communicants. As the advocate in early colonial days, in the face often of bitter persecution, of the distinctive American Protestant principle of the separation of Church and State, Baptists have reason to rejoice in the contribution that is their due credit in the victories of democracy for which their forerunners in stormy Reformation days so valiantly continued. Men of the stamp and character of Blaurock, Grebel, Hubmaier, and Denck

are now recognized by historians as the true and able leaders of the Anabaptists of the Sixteenth Century and not revolutionary fanatics of the type of John of Leyden or the "prophets of Zwickau."

All of the New England colonies were founded by Puritan leaders. The elder Winthrop, Mather, Bradford and a long line of able ministers and laymen guided the affairs of Massachusetts and the adjacent colonies of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Roger Williams founded Rhode Island and its chief city of Providence. In Connecticut, John Davenport, like Calvin at Geneva, hoped at New Haven to found a theocracy, but his large visioned neighbor, Thomas Hooker of Hartford, caught the true spirit of democracy and voiced for the first time on American soil the principles that a century and a half later were wrought into the Constitution of the United States. Referring to the famous sermon preached by Hooker at Hartford in May 31, 1638, Professor Alexander Johnston<sup>1</sup> says: "Here is the first practical assertion of the right of the people not only to choose but to limit the powers of their rulers, an assertion that lies at the foundations of the American system. There is no reference to a 'dread sovereign,' no reservation of deference due to any class, not even to the class to which the speaker himself belonged. Each individual was to exercise his rights 'according to the blessed will and law of God,' but he was to be responsible to God alone for his fulfillment of the obligation. The whole contains the germ of the idea of the commonwealth, and it was de-

<sup>1</sup>One of the ablest of our American historians. His "writings represent original research and rare talent for terse narrative and keen analysis." *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

veloped by his hearers into the constitution of 1639. It is on the banks of the Connecticut under the mighty preaching of Thomas Hooker and in the constitution to which he gave life, if not form, that we draw the first breath of that atmosphere which is now so familiar to us. The birthplace of American democracy is Hartford, Connecticut." "They who judge of men by their services to the human race," says Bancroft, "will never cease to honor the memory of Hooker."<sup>1</sup>

The Presbyterian Church in the United States shares with Congregationalists in this Puritan heritage. "American Presbyterianism as a whole," says Dr. William H. Roberts, "is as diverse in its origin as are the peoples who have blended to form the American nation. The earliest American Presbyterian Churches were established in New England, Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia, from about 1630 to 1680, and were in large part of English origin, their pastors as a rule being Church of England ministers holding Presbyterian views."

It is interesting to note that "the earliest Presbyterian emigration in the colonial period consisted of the French Huguenots," who attempted to form settlements in South Carolina and Florida in 1562-1565. Huguenot churches were formed on Staten Island, New York, in 1665; in

<sup>1</sup>Thomas Hooker was born at Marfield, England, July 7, 1586. A graduate of Cambridge University he became a minister of the Church of England. Silenced in 1630 for nonconformity he spent three years in Holland. In 1633 he sailed with a company of Puritan friends and old parishioners for Boston. He did not sympathize with the autocratic views of Mather and with his Cambridge congregation in 1635 settled in Hartford, where he died, July 7, 1647.

New York City in 1683; at Boston in 1687; at New Rochelle, New York, in 1688, and in other places. The Charleston church, founded in 1686, is the only independent Huguenot church in the United States existing at the present time. This Huguenot emigration, while not large, had a distinctive influence in colonial days that is a rightful heritage of American Presbyterianism. It is to be remembered that John Calvin in early manhood not only "took a foremost place among the leaders of the whole Reformation movement but molded in his plastic hands the Reformation in France. \* \* \* He had an extraordinary power over his co-religionists in his native land. He was a Frenchman—one of themselves; no foreigner speaking an unfamiliar tongue; no enemy of the Fatherland to follow whom might seem to be unpatriotic. It is true that his fixed abode lay beyond the confines of France; but distance, which gave him freedom of action, made him the more esteemed. He was the apostle who wrote 'to all that be in France, beloved of God, called to be saints.'"<sup>1</sup>

The Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System, includes in its world-wide membership all of the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches in the fellowship of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. In their historic life they represent the streams of influence that had their fountain head in the Reformation movement in Geneva, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Bohemia, England, Scotland, Wales, and North Ireland. Calvinistic and Puritan leadership planted not only the Cross of Christ in American

<sup>1</sup>Lindsay. *History of the Reformation*, Vol. II, pp. 153, 154.

soil but in "the doctrine of the unconditioned sovereignty of God," and "the sovereignty of the Word of God as the supreme and infallible rule of faith and practice," they found the principles of democracy that gave them a foremost place, with those of like Puritan faith and doctrine, in laying the foundations of the United States and securing to the people both civil and religious liberty.

The story of the Reformation in Bohemia and the rise of the Moravian fellowship has already been briefly noted.<sup>1</sup> When Luther nailed his *theses* on the door of the Crown church in Wittenberg "the *Unitas Fratrum* embraced about four hundred parishes and two hundred thousand members." Within a limited area this earliest Protestant Church has been a potent influence in the United States but its largest contribution has been as a leavening inspiration in lifting up the commission of the Risen Lord and Saviour. "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations."

The Protestant Episcopal Church did not come to its organization until after the War of the Revolution. In colonial days it was represented by the Church of England. When the war broke out there were about two hundred and fifty clergymen in the colonies who ministered to congregations that comprised a large number of the wealthy and influential families in Virginia and other middle and southern colonies. A large number of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were members of the Church of England, and George Washington attended its services. Naturally the sympathy of many of the clergy and the members of the Church of England

<sup>1</sup>See pages 30-32.

were with the royalists and in the success of the American contention for independence from English control, the close of the war found this branch of the Christian Church in a broken and distressed condition. As an American Church it has come to its present strength and influence. In its divided counsels there has always been, as in no other American Communion, a contention in which the forces representing democracy and autocracy have striven for leadership. This conflict still continues. If true to its Reformation heritage there can be but one conclusion in this strife of parties. Having achieved unity within its own ecclesiastical life the Protestant Episcopal Church will be in a position to unite with sister Churches of the Reformed faith in achieving the unity for which our Divine Lord and Redeemer prayed.

The Lutheran Church now numbering, in its twenty ecclesiastical groups, a membership in the United States of two and a half millions, dates its marvelous growth from the great emigration that set in from Europe early in the Nineteenth Century. A little company of Lutherans joined the Dutch colony on Manhattan Island in 1632. They were treated shamefully. If apologies would mend the historic record every inheritor of the Reformed faith would hasten to give them. In 1638 a company of Swedes settled where the city of Wilmington, Del., now stands. They were the vanguard of that great Scandinavian emigration that has populated especially the states of the Interior and the Northwest.

The German branch of the Lutheran Church dates its American history from the coming of emigrants from the Palatinates to Pennsylvania in 1680. Prior to 1750 over 60,000 Germans settled in this state. It was not, how-



ever, until 1742 that the Lutherans were fully organized in synodical relations. The oldest of the general bodies of the Lutheran Church, the General Synod, founded in 1826, has always maintained friendly relations with other religious bodies. Under the leadership of Professor Samuel S. Schmucker, of the Gettysburg, Pa., Theological Seminary, overtures were sent out to other ministers and Churches in 1838 that outlined in spirit and purpose the plan of federation that is now incorporated in the Constitution of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.<sup>1</sup>

At present the General Synod is the only Lutheran body in the United States that affiliates with other evangelical Churches. "The non-English Lutheran bodies, whose members do not come into close personal contact with the people in purely English Churches, naturally are unconscious of any pressing need of unity with non-Lutheran bodies. They have little in common with them in language, usages, and traditions. Their respective tasks seem to be diverse also. The Lutherans have a great work in caring for their own kindred who come here from other lands."<sup>2</sup>

As the great host of Lutherans, that in the last half century have settled in the Middle and Northwestern states, become assimilated into the national life of the United States we anticipate that this strong, conservative body of Protestant churches will desire closer fellowship

<sup>1</sup>Sanford's *Origin and History of the Federal Council of the Churches*, pp. 89-92.

<sup>2</sup>Rev. J. A. Singmaster, D.D., President of the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pa., in *Churches of the Federal Council*, p. 223.



with their brethren who hold the Reformation faith and, alike with themselves, honor the names of Luther, Melancthon, and the great leaders of the Evangelical Churches of Germany.

"The German Evangelical Synod of North America stands in the United States for the fundamental positive and progressive principles of German Evangelical Christianity established in 1817 by the union of the Reformed and the Lutheran elements in Prussia. In the next quarter of a century some of the ministers and members of that body came to the United States and in 1840 at a settlement near St. Louis, Mo., the first organization was formed. It was then known as the German Evangelical Church Association of the West. This body expanded, and changed to 'Synod of the West' in 1866. In 1877 the body now known as 'the Evangelical Synod of North America' came into being. It works particularly among the German people, although English as well as German is used in many churches and especially in Church literature."<sup>1</sup>

This body of earnest Christian men and women, while numerically one of the smallest in the fellowship of the Federal Council of the Churches, holds an unique position, both in its Reformation heritage and its lifting up, "next to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, the ideal of Christian unity as the chief aim of its organization and activity." This Brotherhood of believers stands for that longing for unity between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches that dates

<sup>1</sup>Rev. J. J. Hortsman, D.D. In *Churches of the Federal Council*, p. 226.

back to the conference held at Marburg in 1529. In the Providence of God they have a special mission that in its fulfillment will witness the passing of differences that have long divided the ranks of Protestantism.

The United Brethren in Christ, with a membership of nearly four hundred thousand, is a fellowship of German origin. Reformed and Mennonite and Lutheran influences blended in its organization in the United States in the latter part of the Eighteenth Century. The United Brethren Church, true to its evangelical heritage, has welcomed every opportunity to join in fellowship with the followers of Christ of every name.

The "Evangelical Association" and the "United Evangelical Church" are of German origin and share in the Reformation history and heritage. Both organizations welcomed the invitation to unite in the fellowship of the Federal Council of the Churches, and have given it their loyal support.

The Disciples fellowship, that has grown into one of the largest Christian forces in the United States, was founded in the interest of Christian unity by men connected with Churches of the Reformed faith.

The Methodist Episcopal Churches, that stand numerically, at the head of the evangelical Churches of the United States, also share in this heritage. Their origin and history is linked with the great Wesleyan revival movement that stirred the life of England in the latter half of the Eighteenth Century and placed the name of John Wesley among the leaders of Christian history.

It was a dark hour in the spiritual life of Britain when the young Oxford graduate and clergyman of the Church of England began his work of reformation. It is true,

as John Richard Green, says, "That in the middle class the old Puritan spirit lived on unchanged, and it was from this class that a religious revival burst forth which changed after a time the whole tone of English society. The Church was restored to life and activity. Religion carried to the hearts of the people a fresh spirit of moral zeal while it purified literature and manners. \* \* \* John Wesley embodied in himself not this or that side of the new movement, but the movement itself."

The story of Wesley's conversion reads like a chapter taken out of the Reformation days. He tells us that it was the calm confidence of the Moravian passengers, in the storms that tossed the vessel that conveyed him across the Atlantic on his way to engage in missionary labors in Georgia, that convinced him that he did not possess the faith that casts out fear. From this time on he came under Moravian influence and guidance. Peter Böhler, the devout Moravian minister, in a very real sense, became his spiritual father. It was in a meeting where Luther's *Preface to the Epistle to the Romans* was being read, that Wesley tells us "About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved me from the law of sin and death." Lecky, in his "History of England in the Eighteenth Century," referring to this incident, says: "It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the scene which took place at that humble meeting in Aldersgate Street forms an epoch in English history. The conviction which then flashed upon one of the most powerful and most ac-

tive intellects in England is the true source of English Methodism," and we can add of American Methodism.

Little did Martin Luther realize that the words penned out of his own soul experience would prove to be the Light of the Spirit that two centuries later would illumine the life of the founder of world-wide Methodism that in the year that celebrates the four hundredth anniversary of the Reformation numbers churches having almost ten million communicants and ministering to a population estimated at over thirty-eight millions. In this heritage not only does the Methodist Episcopal Churches share but also the Methodist Protestant Church, the "Christian" Church, and the African M. E. Churches.

With gratitude to Almighty God millions of Christian communicants, connected with Protestant evangelical Churches, recall the names of their heroic founders; but there is a Name above every Name, in whose presence all earthly leaders bow with penitent, obedient, trusting hearts. Above the tumult of strifes that so often, in centuries past, have divided the Church, of which Christ is the Head, may we not hope and believe that this Twentieth Century of the Christian era shall rejoice in the answer to our Saviour's prayer as He entered the path that led through Gethsemane to the Cross—and then to the morning of the Resurrection and the Day of Pentecost—"that they may all be one; even as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us; that the world may believe that thou didst send me."



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